Memory of Territory as an Ethnic Narrative. Kyrgyz and Uzbek Narratives in Kyrgyzstan

By
Meerim Maturaimova

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Supervisor: Professor Marsha Siefert
Second Reader: Professor Alfred Rieber

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Abstract

This thesis examines the relationship between memory, territory and ethnic identity, namely how the memory of territory shapes a sense of ethnic identity. For this purpose, the thesis analyzes the narratives of Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan. The Uzbeks are the largest minority in Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyzstan, a former Soviet Union state, is now a modern Central Asian state with a complex socio-political structure based on the pre-modern system of kinship ties and also a multiethnic population and some democratic trends. After acknowledging the political events related to territory in the history of the Kyrgyz from the pre-Soviet and Soviet periods up to present day, this thesis argues that territory is of great importance to understanding the 2010 Kyrgyz-Uzbek conflict.

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Introduction

At the beginning of 1990, ethnic Kyrgyz in the rural areas of southern Soviet Kyrgyzstan experienced the difficulties caused by an economic crisis in the entire Soviet Union more severely than the other residents of the country. Animal breeding, in which southern Kyrgyz were traditionally engaged, weas less profitable and more vulnerable to economic uncertainties, which ultimately caused a shortage in jobs and housing. United into an independent movement called *Osh Aimagy* (Osh region), Kyrgyz demanded lands on the outskirts of the city of Osh from the local authorities to create settlements. After the Kyrgyz state authorities, all ethnic Kyrgyz, allotted part of an Uzbek collective farm to Kyrgyz settlers, Uzbeks, who had traditionally been engaged in agriculture and trade, responded with force. The conflict that subsequently took place in Osh and Uzgen resulted in 170 deaths.[1] Although no violent conflicts occurred in Kyrgyzstan thereafter during its almost 20 years of independence, relations between the Kyrgyz and the Uzbeks remained tense and finally erupted into violent conflict in the summer of 2010.

The 2010 conflict between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in the south of Kyrgyzstan was linked to the expulsion of the country's former president, Kurmanbek Bakiyev. The Uzbeks, who live mostly in the south of Kyrgyzstan, were disappointed with his disregard of minorities and lack of any national policy addressing their needs. Hoping for positive change in their situation, they expressed their support for the subsequent interim government. Simultaneously, due to the geographical divide and longstanding political competition between northern and southern clans, the Kyrgyz in the south still supported Bakiyev, a southern Kyrgyz. Amidst growing ethnic tensions, the arson of Bakiyev's property in his hometown of Jalalabad by unknown assailants

[1] Eugene Huskey, "Kyrgyzstan: The Fate of Political Liberalization," in *Conflict, Cleavage, and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, eds. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 242-276.

became one of the reasons for the conflict, as it was interpreted by southern Kyrgyz as an act of Uzbek aggression towards them and the statehood of Kyrgyzstan.[2] The consequent conflict, which involved both the Kyrgyz and the Uzbeks, resulted in 470 casualties and forced 400,000 people to flee to other regions of the country or into Uzbekistan.[3]

In the analyses of the conflict that followed, much scholarly literature has been written on the socio-economic and political problems that contributed to the 2010 conflict. For example, a study by Matveeva *et al.* explains how the conflict owes to the growing social distance between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in the post-Soviet period caused by economic inequalities. Bond and Koch explore how the political weakness of the Kyrgyz state, namely corruption and penetration of organized crime into government structures, contributed to the conflict, given the poverty of the state's southern regions. Furthermore, an analysis by Wilkinson discusses how the concepts of nationhood and statehood, viewed by the Kyrgyz government as interdependent and not considering the minorities, gave a rise to the violence and the consequent negative reaction of the ethnic Kyrgyz to the reports produced by the international organizations, which condemned the Kyrgyz government for not being able to prevent and manage the conflict.[4] These and similar studies are undoubtedly important to understanding the conflict in a great number of aspects.

However, less attention has been paid to the the role of the perception of territory in the 2010 conflict, which also has a great explanatory power, as demonstrated in a number of studies.[5]

[2] Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry into the Events in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010: http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_Report_490.pdf [Accessed on 14 March 2015].
[3] James Kirchick, "Dispatch from the Knife's Edge: The Coming Kyrgyzstan Catastrophe," *The New Republic* 241 (2010): 16-19.
Uzbek refugees were forced by the Uzbek government to return to Kyrgyzstan after the conflict.
[4] Anna Matveeva *et al*., "Kyrgyzstan: Tragedy in the South," *Ethnopolitics Papers* 17 (2012): 1-40; Andrew R. Bond, Natalie R. Koch, "Interethnic Tensions in Kyrgyzstan: a Political Geographic Perspective," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 51 (2010): 531-562; Cai Wilkinson, "Imagining Kyrgyzstan's Nationhood and Statehood: Reactions to the 2010 Osh Violence," *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 43 (2015): 417-436.
[5] Monica Duffy Toft, 2005. *The Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identity, Interests, and the Indivisibility of Territory*. (Princeton: University Press, 2005); Carl Grundy-Warr, ed., *Eurasia: World Boundaries* (London:

To date, Megoran's analysis of the narratives of Kyrgyz and Uzbek dwellers of the Osh city as a "divided and shared space," drawing on the points of convergence and divergence in the discussion of "who owns what," is one of the few if not the only study that approaches the 2010 violence from the territorial point of view. Therefore, this thesis aims to offer insight into how Kyrgyz and Uzbeks' perceptions of territory contributed to the conflict. Specifically, the thesis will seek to explore why, while scholarly works and both international and Kyrgyz media mainly refer to the 2010 events in Kyrgyzstan as "ethnic violence," "ethnic conflict," and "ethnic bloodshed," the local populations in the south of Kyrgyzstan call what happened "war," although neither the Kyrgyz or Uzbek states were involved officially.[6]

In war studies, it is generally accepted that war involves the direct participation of a state and is closely related to politics.[7] The main attribute of war is sustained collective violence, distinguishing it from conflict, which is smaller in scope and impact.[8] Furthermore, there exists a conventional distinction between interstate (international) and intrastate (civil) wars for the control of secession from the state. While the former involves two or more states fighting each

Routledge, 2003); Richard Hawley, "Ethnic Violence in the Former Soviet Union. PhD dissertation" (PhD diss., The Florida State University, 2011).

[6] The sole exception is a journalist article in Aljazeera, which mentions that local population have their own name for the events. There is no further inquiry, however, as to why this difference exists and what it can imply: http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/06/kyrgyzstan-violence-2010-201463016460195835.html [Accessed on 14 March 2015].
Kyrgyz interim government had no control over the situation and appealed for help to Russia, which refused to intervene, stating that the case was of purely domestic character. Uzbekistan initially opened its usually tight borders for Uzbek refugee women and children, however soon declared it does not have enough place to accommodate new refugees thus leaving Kyrgyzstani Uzbeks waiting at the border to themselves. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/kyrgyzstan/7828726/Kyrgyzstan-violence-Uzbekistan-closes-border-to-refugees.html [Accessed on 14 March 2015].

[7] Jack S. Levy, William R. Thompson, *Causes of War (*Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); John A. Vasquez, *The War Puzzle Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (Columbia University Press, 1977); Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton University Press, [1832] 1989).

[8] Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*; Vasquez, *The War Puzzle Revisited.*

other, the latter implies a state fighting with a challenger within its own territory. Other types of war, such as ethnic or religious, fall under either of those two main types.

However, although neither the Kyrgyz nor Uzbek states were involved in events of 2010, the native peoples still refer to what happened as a war. Moreover, Uzbeks did not demand autonomy or any other kind of territorial revision. The events involved the main characteristic of war, i.e. collective violence which is expressed through the targeting of one group by another and the reciprocation of violence. Based on the personal 2014 field research, upon which this thesis relies, it is hypothesized that the key to understanding this terminological difference is the question of territory.[9]

This thesis aims to answer these following questions: What makes ordinary people remember the events as a war? What stories recur in numerous subjects' memories about their relations with one another? Does the war terminology reflect Kyrgyz and Uzbek perceptions of the events and of each other? Answering these questions, however, requires the contextualization of discussed recent developments into a broader perspective. Therefore this thesis will also discuss the different memories of territory in Kygryzstan and the ways they were learnt, transmitted and mobilized within a historical persepctive. It is worthy of note that the research does not imply that its focus on a case study is in any way representative of all ethnic conflicts. However, it has a possibility of showing how the memory of territory can create a feeling of endangered ethnic identity and in critical situations turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

[9] This was a grant research, which I conducted in the south of Kyrgyzstan in May 2014, on how Uzgen managed to prevent the conflict in the summer of 2010. The research activities included 3 group discussions, 20 individual interviews and observation notes. The majority of interviews were collected in the town of Uzgen and the surrounding areas in Uzgen *raion* (district) and complemented with interviews made in Osh city and the capital Bishkek.

Methodology

The data collection for the case study is based on a 2014 oral history of the people living in the south of Kyrgyzstan, specifically in Osh, Jalalabad, and Uzgen. This research originated with an aim to understand why the 2010 conflict took place in Osh and Jalalabad but not in Uzgen, which is located between them, and assess the role of different actors who contributed to sustaining peace. However, during the course of the research, it became clear that while answering different questions on their present, such as on community leaders or relations with their neighbors, interlocutors mentioned the theme of territoriality related to distant past quite often.[10] These comments emerged so strongly that it became apprent that a secondary analysis of the collected interviews, namely the comments on territoriality, was needed to understand the conflict more deeply. Therefore, the material presented in this thesis is a result of such rethinking.

The data were collected during 30 days of field research and the research activities included 3 group discussions, 20 individual interviews, and observation notes. The stakeholder groups that were researched include representatives of local government and customary institutions, civil society organizations, law-enforcement officers, female and male leaders of communities, youth groups, and religious communities. In addition, interviews with ordinary people, both ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, were conducted. The representatives of the latter group of interviewees usually preferred that their names remain confidential, with one Uzbek woman willing to speak but refusing to tell her name. Therefore, while the names of official representatives are mentioned in the thesis, except for the head of an NGO who also asked not to publish his name, those of ordinary people have been changed to ensure that the research does

[10] A questionnaire/checklist is attached as Appendix 1.

not pose any threat to their safety from other members of the community or from the local or regional government.

All interviews conducted for this research were semi-structured and contained clearly defined questions. The interviewees also had the opportunity to talk more broadly on their answer as long as it was related to the core question discussed. In terms of organization, women and youth were interviewed in groups of 3-5 people and separately from men due to the social hierarchy that exists in both Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities, which favours age over youth and subordinates females to males. Men were interviewed in groups or as individuals and were chosen based on their position in their community or institution. Similarly, representatives of Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities were interviewed separately to allow each side to speak out freely.

At the same time, interlocutors were never directly asked their ethnic identity. Since identity is not constant but fluid and tends to change over time, establishing ethnic categories in research can prove to be a self-fulfilling prophecy.[11] This can result in interviewees answering as representatives of their ethnicities ought to answer, rather than what they themselves think as individuals, especially if their opinion differs from the majority of their respective ethnicities. Interviewees were therefore observed while they answered questions to see whether and how their ethnicity manifested itself (e.g. mannerisms or language used by the interviewee).

Interviews with ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks were conducted in the Kyrgyz and Uzbek languages respectively. Interviews in Uzbek were conducted with the assistance of an interpreter. The Kyrgyz ethnicity of both the researcher and the interpreter could potentially influence the answers of Uzbek respondents, who tended to grow reluctant in answering questions regarding the 2010 conflict. However, the ethnicity factor was visibly lessened by the fact that interviews

[11] Nick Megoran "Shared Space, Divided Space: Narrating Ethnic Histories of Osh," *Environment and Planning* 45 (2013), 892-907.

with Uzbeks were conducted in Uzbek language, given that Uzbeks in the south are often expected to speak Kyrgyz rather than Uzbek by the local Kyrgyz population. In addition to the field research findings, the thesis is also supplemented by analyses of history textbooks, secondary academic literature, reports in Kyrgyzstani and international media.

Thesis structure

The first chapter provides a theoretical background for the empirical analysis presented in the rest of the thesis. In particular, it discusses theories of memory, territory, and ethnicity relevant to the general discourse of the thesis, and the relationship between them. After setting a theoretical approach, the thesis moves to the interpretive view of the formation of the Kyrgyz nation and its relation to its present territory as narrated by the Soviet authorities through establishing the Kyrgyz state and implementation of various national policies. Success of these national policies is demonstrated in the empirical analysis of the 1990 Kyrgyz-Uzbek conflict.

The second part examines the nationality policies of both the first and the second presidents of Kyrgyzstan, Akayev and Bakiyev respectively, after the country had gained its independence in 1991. It also will investigate the implications of these policies on the development of Kyrgyz-Uzbek relations. While discussing the above-mentioned issues, the thesis will return to the issue of the development of the cultural aspect of Kyrgyz politics, namely the "clan governance." This part of the research will seek to provide a discourse analysis of politicians' narratives of politicians (mostly Kyrgyz) on regional division of the Kyrgyz into "northerners" and "southerners," in which, however, Uzbeks are erased from the ethnic

taxonomy, despite constituting the largest minority in the country.[12] The chapter will also demonstrate that turning points in relations between the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks happened when the country experienced critical situations related to territory, such as the disputed border between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and the intrusion of the radical Islamic organization from Uzbekistan.

The third part provides a case study of the 2010 Kyrgyz-Uzbek interethnic violence in Osh and Jalalabad cities, and the absence of violence in Uzgen *raion*, which is situated between the named cities and which was the epicenter of the first Kyrgyz-Uzbek violent conflict in 1990. The chapter provides a "cause and effect" analysis of violent events in Osh and Jalalabad and tries to correlate them with theories of memory and territory in order to understand what episodes ordinary people see as signs of war and, based on the fieldwork interviews conducted in the spring of 2014, attempt to understand what meaning war has for them and why they remember the 2010 events as a war.

Chapter I. Constructing the narrative of ethnicity in Soviet time

As it has been suggested earlier, memory of territory is important to understanding ethnic conflicts. To support this argument, this chapter will (1) discuss the interrelationship between memory, territory and ethnic identity, namely how memory of territory shapes a sense of ethnic belonging. In order to understand the role of memory of territory in shaping present narratives of Kyrgyz identity, the historical conditions of their emergence need to be traced, since it is little use discussing memory of territory of the Kyrgyz without explaining the circumstances which created the necessary prerequisites for it. After having set the theoretical background, the chapter

[12] Officially Uzbek population comprises 14%, most of them living in the South of Kyrgyzstan. However, some Uzbeks claim their population is much larger than that, and that Kyrgyz authorities purposefully do not release true number out of fear this may induce Uzbeks to make territorial claims. For more details, see Karlien Den Blanken, "Our Uzbek Land in Kyrgyzstan: The Uzbek Minority and Claims for Cultural Politics" (MA thesis, Radboud University Nijmegen, 2009).

will (2) examine self-identification of the Kyrgyz in the early stages of its existence, and how the situation was changing under the national policies of Tsarist and, consequently, Soviet rule. Finally, the chapter will conclude by (3) arguing that it institutionalizing territory was one of the key political actions to giving birth to and cultivating Kyrgyz nationalism and the emergence of the Kyrgyz nation.

Theoretical background: memory, territory and ethnicity

One of the classical studies on memory was developed by Halbwachs in the 1950s. Halbwachs distinguished between memory as a "lived history,"– in which people narrate their past on the basis of their recent experiences,– and memory as a "written history" represented in books. There is a big time lapse between the "lived" and "written" memories which can potentially estrange historical narratives of present generations from those of their ancestors. However, this gap, according to Halbwachs, is filled by public commemorations and celebrations which transfer the "written history" to the domain of "lived history" thereby reinforcing the memory of a group and the group itself. Since commemorations and festivities take place within a social group, individuals remember things as members of a group.[13] Therefore, individual memories are embedded in the group context.[14]

Another important and more recent study on memory was made by Assmann who distinguishes other types of memory, namely "communicative memory" and "cultural memory." Communicative memory deals with personal remembrances and everyday experiences of the recent past. Its important trait is the temporal horizon which, according to oral history studies, embraces usually the last eighty, maximum, one hundred years period that includes approximately four generations. The temporal horizon is subject to change with successive

[13] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press [1952] 1992).
[14] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*.

generations. As Assmann explains, "the communicative memory offers no fixed point which would bind it to the ever expanding past in the passing of time. Such fixity can only be achieved through a cultural formation and therefore lies outside of informal everyday memory."[15]

While Halbachs did not discuss how memories of the present are reconciled with those of the distant past, which could imply that recent memories are less important and thus vanish, and distant memories become histories, Assmann contends that both recent and past memories are important in shaping a group identity. He argues that a group's attachment to these completely different memories is equally close and that both are taken into consideration.[16]

Cultural memory in Assmann's view refers to origins and distant past and, unlike communicative memory, it has fixed reference points which do not change with the time. These fixed points are represented in cultural practices (rituals, texts, and monuments) and in institutional communication (folklore, observance), altogether referred to as "figures of memory." Figures of memory are filtered over time and crystallize into a group identity, and in the end it can consist of figures of memory from different time periods at the same time, thereby becoming a "collective experience… whose meaning, when touched upon, may suddenly become accessible again across millennia." Assmann stresses that despite the fixed figures of memory, cultural memory is under constant construction and reconstruction, because it tends to appropriate or change the meaning of the figures of memory according to its current context and needs.[17]

Based on the theories discussed above, I contend that as an individual develops memory and sense of the common past within his social group, he simultaneously develops an attachment to place. People make attachments to places that are of high importance to their psychological

[15] Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (1995), 127.
[16] Assmann and Czaplicka, Collective Memory and Cultural Identity, 127.
[17] Assmann and Czaplicka, Collective Memory and Cultural Identity, 128-130.

and physical well-being from the earliest periods of their lifes. Place attachement is "a psychological process similar to an infant's attachment to parental figures" in that it provides a sense of security.[18] An individual takes part in public life as a dweller of a particular group based on a specific territory, and thus it is possible to suggest that place attachment develops with time into a memory of territory. Territory is thus central to the concept of place attachement. The memory of territory is so strong that even when the place of attachment ceases to exist, people tend to deplore its loss.[19]

Regarding territory, there are many definitions of this term depending on the area of research. For example, law defines territory as an area under jurisdiction of a particular state or individual. The ethnological approach to territory stresses its biological aspect – territoriality - associated with the defense of territory by one group of species against another, which involves tribalism and ethnic nationalism. Such vision brings human societies closer to animal societies and limits the notion of territory to a "boundary" inevitably causing conflicts. Another, geographic, approach sees territory as an appropriated space serving to satisfy the vital needs of a community and thus having strictly utilitarian role. Such a view, therefore, reduced the meaning of territory to merely "projection in space of a social structure."[20]

To sum up, memory plays a crucial role in shaping national identity by linking present generations to the distant past of their ancestors through the practice of rituals. However, while the distant past is "fixed," it is at the same time subject to changes by successive generations through different interpretation, transformation or appropriation. Memory of territory is the most ubiquitous, as it stems from both biological need of humans to secure their survival as species

[18] Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1995).
[19] Hayden, The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History.
[20] Joel, Bonnemaison, Culture and Space: Conceiving a New Cultural Geography (London: Tauris, 2005), 114.

and the geographical need to adapt to the environment. Serving as a source of identity, territory, when disputed, has a possibility to become a source of conflict.

Ethnic fusion and supra-ethnic identities in Central Asia

It is problematic to research the "genuine" origin of any ethnicity, which makes it easy for people to present their history as they want it to be.[21] It is difficult to talk about Kyrgyz nation, or any other present Central Asian nation, before the invasion of Russian colonizers into Central Asia in the mid-nineteenth century because until that time such concepts just did not exist. Due to the strategic location of the Eurasian continent, the Central Asian region experienced numerous inflows of different peoples,– Iranians, Turks, Arabs, Mongols and others. As a consequence Central Asian peoples experienced similar cultural traits and often fused. This fluidity can be seen in the tribal components of the present nations. For example, the tribes of "Naimans not only contributed to the ethnogenesis of the Kazakhs, but also to that of the Kyrgyz… and Uzbeks; … the Usunis - to the Kyrgyz, Kazakhs, Turkmen and Uzbeks," etc.[22]

Perhaps of greater importance, all Central Asians professed the same religion, Islam, introduced by the Arabs in the seventh century. Given that, by the fourteenth century, Central Asia was largely Muslim, it is easy to assume that a supra-ethnic pan-Islamic identity could serve as a unifying, homogenizing force.[23] However, it should be taken into account that Islam spread very unevenly, – while Turkmen, Uzbeks and Tajiks were Islamized to a considerable degree, the same cannot be said about Kyrgyz and Kazakhs. Both Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan were Islamized only in their southern part, whereas the northern part remained far from Islamized.

[21] Den Blanken, "Our Uzbek Land in Kyrgyzstan: The Uzbek Minority and Claims for Cultural Politics," 12.
[22] Shirin Akiner, "Melting Pot, Salad Bowl – Cauldron? Manipulation and Mobilisation of Ethnic and Religious Identities in Central Asia," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 20 (1997), 362-398.
[23] Akiner, "Melting Pot, Salad Bowl – Cauldron? Manipulation and Mobilisation of Ethnic and Religious Identities in Central Asia," 364; John Glenn, *The Soviet Legacy in Central Asia* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 51.

"Islam may therefore have acted as a unifying tendency, but equally it may have served to divide ethnic groups because of its uneven influence within certain regions and the manner in which the population was proselytized."[24] Thus, it can be said that the national identities of Central Asian peoples took a unique route in the formation of their own ethnic identity.[25]

Emergence of Kyrgyz ethnic identity

After the Mongol invasion in the southern territory of present Kyrgyzstan, there existed a khanate (kingdom) called the Kyrgyz khanate. Later Kyrgyz tribes who lived in the Kyrgyz khanate were ruled by Uzbek dynasties within the multi-ethnic Kokand khanate.[26] However, Kyrgyz political and social relations were still closely linked to sub-ethnic identities such as tribes and clans. As Khazanov put it, "an individual thought of himself primarily as... a member of an individual tribe, and only secondarily and in specific situations did he acknowledge that he was also [a Kyrgyz]."[27] This individual characterization can be explained by the fact that Kyrgyz rarely settled and thereby "clannish and tribal ties, rather than a sense of precise locality, provided the foremost elements of their identity."[28] Nevertheless, the Kyrgyz experienced an increase in the mode of self-definition by the end of the nineteenth century, as in this period they began to define themselves as distinct from the other Central Asian people. Their ethnic identity now was attributed to a territory around the Tian-Shan mountains, to a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle, and to the epic *Manas* that narrated the common history and customs of the Kyrgyz.[29] Such

[24] Glenn, *The Soviet Legacy in Central Asia*, 65.
[25] Anatoly Khazanov, "Nations and Nationalism in Central Asia," in Sage Handbook of Nations and Nationalism. eds. Gerard Delanty and Krishan Kumar. (London: Sage, 2006), 450-451.
[26] Hawley, Ethnic Violence in the Former Soviet Union, 100-101.
[27] Khazanov, "Nations and Nationalism in Central Asia," 450.
[28] Robert Lowe, "Nation-building and Identity in the Kyrgyz Republic," in *Central Asia: Aspects of Transition, ed.* Tom Everett-Heath (London: Routledge, 2003), 108.
[29] Eugene Huskey, "Kyrgyzstan: The Politics of Economic and Demographic Frustration" (research paper produced for The National Council for Soviet and East European Research, Washington, D.C., July 31, 1995).

characterisitcs resembles Assmann's typology of memory, the tribal identity and linkage to territory falling under the "comunicative," or everyday memory within the limits of a hundred years maximum, and the epic Manas,– which according to different hypotheses dates back to the 9th or 15-16th centuries and also has various versions of recitation,– being part of the "cultural," or distant memory.

At this stage, it can be said that the Kyrgyz developed a group awareness which could characterized as "sharing a common culture and common descent, [where] yet culture is vague and descent usually factious."[30] However, at that time it was unlikely that many Kyrgyz people had thought of themselves as of a nation.[31] National identity differs from tribal and clan identities in that while membership in a clan or a tribe supposes that all its members know each other personally, "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their community."[32] The nation is thus "an imagined political community and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign."[33]

Furthermore, rugged mountains between the northern and the southern parts of the Kyrgyz lands significantly limited communication among the Kyrgyz.[34] As a result, Kyrgyz tribes were divided into southern and northern clans in accordance with geography and often engaged in competition with each other.[35] While Kyrgyz living in the south had close relations with Kokand

[30] Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 10.
[31] Lowe, "Nation-building and Identity in the Kyrgyz Republic," 108.
[32] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (*London: Verso, 2006), 6.
[33] Anderson, *Imagined Communities, 6.*
[34] Huskey, "Kyrgyzstan: The Fate of Political Liberalization," 243.
[35] Lowe, "Nation-building and Identity in the Kyrgyz Republic," 108.

Khanate of the Uzbeks, those living in the north mostly developed relations with the Russian empire.[36]

Tsarist Empire (1870 – 1917). Changes in the Kyrgyz ethnic identity

In the mid-nineteenth century, the Russian Empire started expanding its territories into Central Asian lands.[37] While the northern Kyrgyz clans did not try to oppose the Russian invaders due to already existing cooperation between them, the southern clans strongly resisted them.[38] At the beginning relations between the Russians and the Kyrgyz were quite neutral, but there was considerable alienation from Russians. Kyrgyz perceived Russians in religious terms, rather than ethnic, labelling Russians as non-Muslims. This kind of labelling, however, had little to do with religion, but rather with different outlooks and lifestyles.[39] Thus, the supra-ethnic Muslim identity of the Kyrgyz, despite the fact that they were less Islamized than other Central Asians, was stronger than their tribal identity.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Russians encroached into traditional Kyrgyz grazing lands in northern Kyrgyzstan. As a result, in the next ten years, the number of Kyrgyz declined by almost nine per cent while that of Russian settlers increased by ten per cent. This shift could be seen also in Pishpek (present capital of Kyrgyzstan, now called Bishkek), which by 1916 had a population of 14,000 people, 8,000 of which were Russian.[40] The mass resentment reached its apogee in 1916 after the Tsarist Government issued a decree obliging all men, aged

[36] Irina Morozova, "Regional Factor in Intra-Elite Rivalry in Present Kyrgyzstan," *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 37 (2010) 59; Huskey, "Kyrgyzstan: The Fate of Political Liberalization," 243.
[37] Huskey, "Kyrgyzstan: The Politics of Economic and Demographic Frustration," 2.
[38] Bond and Koch, "Interethnic Tensions in Kyrgyzstan: a Political Geographic Perspective," 536.
[39] Akiner, "Melting Pot, Salad Bowl – Cauldron? Manipulation and Mobilisation of Ethnic and Religious Identities in Central Asia," 370.
[40] Huskey, "Kyrgyzstan: The Politics of Economic and Demographic Frustration," 2.

19 to 43, to join the Russian troops in the war in Europe. The Kyrgyz responded by attacking the representatives of Tsarist authorities who immediately started attacking them in response.

The events in the city of Tokmok in the north of Kyrgyzstan were perhaps the most fierce and brutal. There, 5,000 Kyrgyz repeatedly attacked a small Russian garrison. The city was then besieged and the battle ended with 300 Kyrgyz and two Russian casualties. Furthermore, the Russians initiated massacres of the Kyrgyz civilian population. The outcome was tragic,– "out of an estimated population of 780,000 in 1916, 100-120,000 Kyrgyz are believed to have been killed in the uprisings. A similar number sought refuge in China through the treacherous, icy passes of the Tian-Shan."[41] Many refugees died en route; others did not survive the first winter, after losing their herds. Although the Kyrgyz and the Russians returned to peaceful coexistence by the end of the year, a strong resentment against the Russians remained among the Kyrgyz.[42]

However, it should not be considered that the events described above induced the Kyrgyz to develop nationalism - and not because they did not claim their state and power, as Eriksen supposed.[43] In fact, as Hall said, "the awakening of the nations… does not always mean that every nation sought its own state."[44] The reason why the Kyrgyz did not develop a sense of the nation is that, as was discussed earlier, their ethnic identity was so weak that even the relatively weak pan-Islamic identity was stronger than the ethnic identity.

[41] Huskey, "Kyrgyzstan: The Politics of Economic and Demographic Frustration," 2-3.
[42] Elizabeth Bacon, *Central Asians under Russian Rule: A Study in Culture Change* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1966), 151.
[43] Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives (*London: Pluto Press, 2002), 7.
[44] John A. Hall, "Conditions for National Homogenisers" in *Nationalism and its Futures, ed.* Umut Ozkirimli (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 22.

Soviet Union (1917-1991). Institutionalizing the Kyrgyz nation

The Bolshevik revolution occurred in 1917,– only a year after the 1916 pogroms. The Bolshevik project for the socialization of the former colony was not only to modernize and educate the "backward peoples of the east," but also to prevent the rise of nationalism, which developed under the Tsarist rule, and to justify the legitimacy of the Soviet Union.[45] For this purpose, the Soviets decided to encourage the Kyrgyz to develop a strong sense of the nation, which in their view would vindicate the injustices initiated by the Russians during colonial times. It is true that Soviets also elaborated the idea of the *Soviet People*, but this was the additional, supra-national kind of identity. The Soviets' paramount goal was to promote a national, ethnic identity.[46] In this relation the Soviet Union "went further than any other state before or since in institutionalising territorial *nationhood* and ethnic *nationality* as fundamental social categories."[47] As a result, it created a fertile ground for nationalism to emerge and develop in the Union states and Kyrgyzstan in particular.

Territorial delineation and korenizatsiia

The Soviets started with granting the Kyrgyz their own nationhood by giving them territory and political rights within that territory. The creation of national republics and delineation of territories was launched. Although Central Asian peoples were mixed in their settlements to a great degree, the Soviets were able to draw the boundary lines between the territories in such a way that different ethnicities constituted the majority within these territories. In Kyrgyzstan's case, "86 per cent of those defined as "Kyrgyz"… lived within the designated

[45] Lowe, "Nation-building and Identity in the Kyrgyz Republic," 108.
[46] Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 28.
[47] Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed,* 23.

"Kyrgyz" territory."[48] At the same time, "the institution of national republics… defined as the states of and for particular nations, legitimated the preferential treatment of members of the "titular," nominally state-bearing nationalities."[49]

Thus, after defining the territory there was no question about who should get political power to rule this territory – it was a "titular nation." This program was called *korenizatsiia* which can be literally translated as indigenization.[50] The implementation of the named program was quite successful - already by the mid-1920s in Soviet Kyrgyzstan "10 of 13 members of the Communist Party's first Orgburo in the Kara-Kyrgyz region were ethnic Kyrgyz, as were 13 of 17 members of the highest state body in the region, the oblast revolutionary committee (*obrevkom*)."[51] Thereby, the indigenization program promoted ethnic nationality not as a

> *statistical category…* employed in censuses and other surveys, [but as] an obligatory and mainly ascriptive *legal category*, a key element of an individual's legal status... it was registered in internal passports and other personal documents, transmitted by descent, and recorded in almost all bureaucratic encounters and official transactions.[52]

It is interesting to note that after the delineation a number of villages with populations mixed as in multiple claimed they were "listed" in the wrong republic and requested that they be included in their "right" state. For example, anticipating the land reform and agronomical help from the state to the Uzbekistan, Uzbeks of the Aim village in Kyrgyzstan wrote petitions to Moscow stressing that they were Uzbeks and thus peasant-cotton growers who are in need of state help with agriculture, unlike the Kyrgyz cattle-breeders, and thus the village they live in should be

[48] Lowe, "Nation-building and Identity in the Kyrgyz Republic," 109. This statistic did not consider the Russian population who migrated during the years of colonization, but only Central Asian indigenous peoples.
[49] Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed,* 38.
[50] Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 10.
[51] Huskey, "Kyrgyzstan: The Politics of Economic and Demographic Frustration," 2-3.
[52] Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed,* 31.

included in Uzbekistan's territory. Kyrgyz, however, replied with similar petitions stating that they needed their land for cattle breeding.[53] Such a rapid development and employment of nationalist rhetoric is striking, considering that, as mentioned earlier, Central Asian peoples were initially distinguished as separate groups by the Russian colonizers only at the end of the nineteenth century. It is even more striking to think that by that time the culture of nomadic Kyrgyz (unlike that of sedentary Uzbeks) did not have elements of ownership and instead put emphasis on non-material values such as personal virtues.[54]

It was forced sedentarization and collectivization taking place in the same years that significantly influenced the nomadic lifestyle of the Kyrgyz and their perception of territory. Until then, pastures were controlled by the patrilineal descendant subdivisions called *uruk*. People mainly lived with members of their *uruk* in yurts, transportable felt houses, in their seasonal pastures. As the study by Alan DeYoung *et al.* of Ylay Talaa valley in the south of Kyrgyzstan shows, for nomadic societies, places are rather fluid, while the public domain is rather centered around families. In fact, the whole "social organization is bounded by family histories and traditions as opposed to primarily instrumental or "civic" objectives."[55] The study reveals a number of oral histories, in which Ylay Talaa elders recalled that "a clan could not "own" a place; instead, other families, clans and tribes "understood" which families laid claim to which territories." This is not to say that place attachment did not occur and develop into a memory among the Kyrgyz, on the contrary, in case of territorial disputes, negotiations were organized

[53] Beatrice Penati, "Life on the Edge: Border-Making and Agrarian Policies in the Aim District (Eastern Fergana), 1924-1929." *Ab Imperio*, 2 (2014) 193-230.
[54] Matveeva *et al.*, "Kyrgyzstan: Tragedy in the South," 11.
[55] Alan DeYoung *et al*, "Creating and Contesting Meanings of Place and Community in the Ylay Talaa Valley of Kyrgyzstan." *Central Asian Survey* 32 (2013) 162.

with an active participation of communities' elders.[56] Therefore, "ownership" of territory did exist among the Kyrgyz; however, the scale of the ownership as well as the size of territory were different from what they became under the Soviet influence.

With the introduction of collectivization in 1920s and 1930s, a large amount of *kolkhoz* were created for newly built villages and Kyrgyz were forced to become sedentary. *Kolkhoz*, or state farms, were designed for the collective animal-herding, previously was organized at family level, as well as cultivation of large amounts of land and job creation for the local population.[57] The emergence of *kolkhoz* led to a shift in social relations due to the new spatial-economic divisions. Namely, *kolkhoz* and their corresponding villages were organized in such a way that they significantly broke the *uruks*' pasture territories. Each *kolkhoz* now had members whose patrilineal descents were different and working at the same *kolkhoz*. Therefore, as people gradually became less attached to their clan and tribal identity the regional and national sense of identification became more important for them. Correspondingly, their perception of ownership of territory changed from fluid ownership of a pasture to the fixed ownership of the entire state.

The regional self-dentification can be seen in particular in that later in the Soviet time, the reins of government were distributed disproportionately between the Kyrgyz due to Kyrgyzstan's old north-south cleavage. The northerners, due to their earlier cooperation with the Russians before the Russian expansion, received more important positions in decision-making than southerners.[58] Consequently, since "Kyrgyz clan-based relations include a strong element of patronage, the… northern clans [in] the Soviet period… control[led] low- and medium-level

[56] Alan DeYoung *et al*, "Creating and Contesting Meanings of Place and Community in the Ylay Talaa Valley of Kyrgyzstan," 164.
[57] Alan DeYoung *et al*, "Creating and Contesting Meanings of Place and Community in the Ylay Talaa Valley of Kyrgyzstan,"162.
[58] Morozova, "Regional Factor in Intra-Elite Rivalry in Present Kyrgyzstan," p.60.

appointments in the Kyrgyz SSR state system for many years. Only by late in the Soviet era, when... a southerner became Kyrgyzstan's (last) Party First Secretary in 1985, were the tables turned."[59] Such selectivity of the Soviet authorities in appointing the Kyrgyz was not, as Luong argues, "to create, and politicize regional socio-political cleavages by restricting individual identities, group relations and power asymmetries on the basis of regional affiliation."[60] Rather, as Morozova explains, it was aimed to create a political elite.[61]

According to Hall, "the move from cultural awareness to the demand for a state of one's own, resulted most of all from the behaviour of the state with which the nations interacted."[62] That is, the tenser the relations were between the state and people subservient to it, the more attractive the idea of establishing their own state was to the people , and vice versa,– the better the relations between the state and the people subjected to it, the less the people desired to create a state of their own. The latter seems to be true in the case of Kyrgyz. The Russians' encouragement of Kyrgyz cultural self-expression, i.e. giving the Kyrgyz the status of a "titular nation," resulted in a Kyrgyz populace that was disinclined to initiate secession from the Soviet Union. However, it was precisely these Soviet policies which promoted the rise of Kyrgyz sense of the nation and emerging nationalism.[63] The latter at this stage could be characterized as "the belief in the primacy of a particular nation… the logic of this position tends to move nationalism from cultural to political forms."[64]

[59] Bond and Koch, "Interethnic Tensions in Kyrgyzstan: a Political Geographic Perspective," 536.
[60] Pauline Jones Luong. *Institutional Change and Political Continuity in Post-Soviet Central Asia: Power, Perceptions and Pacts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 63.
[61] Morozova, "Regional Factor in Intra-Elite Rivalry in Present Kyrgyzstan," 61.
[62] Hall, "Conditions for National Homogenisers," 22.
[63] Huskey, "Kyrgyzstan: The Politics of Economic and Demographic Frustration," 3.
[64] John A. Hall, "Nationalisms: Classified and Explained". *Daedalus* 122 (1993), 2.

Nationalism was expressed, for example, in telling the people of other nationalities, including a significant number of Uzbeks who found themselves in newly delineated Kyrgyzstan, "to go home" after the latter complained about their disadvantaged situation provoked by the *korenizatsiia.*[65] The *korenizatsiia* "generally excluded [them] from the ranks of power in the Kyrgyz SSR."[66] This exclusion on the basis of ethnic nationality can be seen again in the statistics,– "only one of the 25 party first secretaries of local districts and cities was an Uzbek and only 4.7 per cent of leading department posts in soviets in the region were held by Uzbeks (85 per cent were occupied by Kyrgyz). This perception of political disenfranchisement fed Uzbek irredentism."[67] Therefore, Mann's theory is supported: the majorities, who are "in control of the state... [and] believe it should express [their] needs... [and] not those of minorities. Minorities may be confident of their power in being the majority in a state with different borders, or believe that their homeland or co-ethnic state will protect them if they rise up."[68]

Consequently, Uzbeks also developed an attachment to Uzbekistan - the state of their ethnic nationality - and not to Kyrgyzstan, state of their residence. This was provoked not only due to the indigenization program, but also by anti-assimilation efforts. The Soviet authorities did not encourage minorities like Uzbeks to assimilate, because they feared it "would provoke a fearful, defensive nationalism among the remaining unassimilated group members."[69] Considering Uzbekistan's most favorable position among the other Central Asian states, developing attachment to Uzbekistan might have been even desired by the Kyrgyzstani Uzbeks.

[65] Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 72.
[66] Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic. Bond and Koch, "Interethnic Tensions in Kyrgyzstan: a Political Geographic Perspective," 550.
[67] Huskey, "Kyrgyzstan: The Politics of Economic and Demographic Frustration," 8.
[68] Michael Mann, "Explaining Murderous Ethnic Cleansing: The Macro-Level" in *Understanding Nationalism*, eds. Montserrat Guibernau and John Hutchinson (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), 236.
[69] Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 32.

Soviet Uzbekistan was "the major strategic center and Russian stronghold," as well as the "strongest unit in terms of population, resources, and territory," which after the 1925 territorial delimitation included the fertile Fergana valley and most of the ancient historical and cultural points, such as the cities of Bukhara and Samarkand.[70]

Moreover, as Manz argues, due to Uzbekistan's high status in the Soviet Union, "Uzbek could play the tyrant and display a chauvinist attitude towards his national minorities and native compatriots… Moscow's repeated warnings throughout the 1920s regarding "Great power chauvinism" were directed not only at local Russians but also at the Uzbeks."[71] Against this background, it can be assumed that Kyrgyzstani Uzbeks were driven to develop attachment to Uzbekistan for two reasons, the anti-assimilation efforts of the Soviet authorities and the high status of the Uzbeks among other Central Asian peoples.

At this point it can be seen from the case of both Kyrgyz and Uzbeks that nationalism was not engendered by Kyrgyz or Uzbeks, the ethnic nationalities or nations, to which they were referred after being granted their own states. It was provoked by particular political actions, or, to adopt Brubaker's term, "*political fields."*[72] It is tempting to say that, since the Kyrgyz introduced their cultural element,– clan-based relations,– into politics, their cultural traits were stronger than their political aspirations. Lowe states that according to the Soviets' plan, kin groups and regional networks were supposed to vanish.[73] Nevertheless, even if this was their

[70] Beatrice F. Manz, ed. *Central Asia in Historical Perspective* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 119.
[71] Manz, *Central Asia in Historical Perspective*, 120.
[72] Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 17.
[73] Lowe, "Nation-building and Identity in the Kyrgyz Republic," 112.

plan, the Soviets allowed, and even encouraged, clan and regional stratification of the Kyrgyz in order to create the political elite necessary for the implementation of the nationalist program.[74]

Moreover, the competition among the so-called northerners and southerners was first and foremost a competition for *power* in the form of "access… to goods in short supply."[75] Furthermore, constant conflicts between the Kyrgyz political elites and the Soviet authorities over investment and resource allocation during the whole Soviet period demonstrates that the conflicts were in no way "the struggles of nations, but the struggles of institutionally constituted national elites – that is elites institutionally defined *as national* – and aspiring counter-elites."[76]

"Remembering" and "forgetting" national history

According to Renan, nations remember and forget past events *selectively*, attaching importance to particular occurrences in its history and, at the same time, diminishing the importance of others. Nations are, therefore, "the culmination of a long past of endeavors, sacrifice, and devotion."[77] In Central Asia, particularly under the Soviet dominion of the region during the 20th century, the distinct historical differences between the separate nationalities that inhabit the region were highlighted, while their common history was understated. The Soviets promoted a pre-modern type of national history which held that Kyrgyz, as the titular people of their nation, were pivotal to the establishment of their republic.[78]

[74] Morozova, "Regional Factor in Intra-Elite Rivalry in Present Kyrgyzstan," 61.
[75] Bond and Koch, "Interethnic Tensions in Kyrgyzstan: a Political Geographic Perspective," 536; Khazanov, "Nations and Nationalism in Central Asia," 453.
[76] Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 25 (original emphasis); Huskey, "Kyrgyzstan: The Politics of Economic and Demographic Frustration," 4; Morozova, "Regional Factor in Intra-Elite Rivalry in Present Kyrgyzstan," 63.
[77] Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?" in *Nation and Narration,* ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London: Routledge, [1882] 1990), 8-22.
[78] Lowe, "Nation-building and Identity in the Kyrgyz Republic," 110; Khazanov, "Nations and Nationalism in Central Asia," 451.

As Marlene Laruelle shows in her study of ethnogenesis in Soviet Central Asia, Soviet historiography of Central Asian nations valorized them by emphasizing their cultural and national uniqueness.[79] Specifically, Stalin made official the idea that "a unique genius lay at the heart of each of the cultures within the Soviet Union."[80] This was done by stressing the indigenousness and antiquity of a given "nation" by "placing" the people within the territories of what was defined by the Soviets as their states, while rejecting that they had migrated from somewhere else. Instead, it was claimed by the Soviet state that the newly created nations had always existed in their respective places. An example of this can be seen in a study from 1949 of the Tajiks, who are of Eastern Iranian origin, which stated that "the eastern Iranian populations of Central Asia did not come from anywhere but constituted themselves right there, on site."[81]

The case of Kyrgyzstan, however, was unusual in comparison to the other Central Asian states. Kyrgyzstan was the last, by the span of a decade, to produce an official version of ethnogenesis, as reconciling different historical sources mentioning "Kyrgyz" proved to be impossible. Historians had thus to choose either to state that Kyrgyz always belonged to Tian-Shan where they were situated presently without reliable historical references or to propagate that the Kyrgyz came from places outside the current Kyrgyz borders, namely Southern Siberia, while noting that wherever placed, Kyrgyz always have had a state of their own. At long last, the latter version was made official, as reflected in the first book on the Kyrgyz ethnogenesis.[82] Moreover, the principles of writing Central Asian history, established for the first time at the first Soviet conference on ethnogenesis, stated that "each eponymous people with its own republic was to

[79] Marlene Laruelle, "The concept of ethnogenesis in Central Asia. Political Context and Institutional Mediators (1940-50)." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 9 (2008), 169-188.
[80] Laruelle, "The concept of ethnogenesis in Central Asia," 172.
[81] B.G. Gafurov, *Istoriia tadzhikskogo naroda v kratkom izlozhenii* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1949), 26 cited in Laruelle, "The concept of ethnogenesis in Central Asia,"175.
[82] Laruelle, "The concept of ethnogenesis in Central Asia," 181.

establish a dynasty of reference and identify a chronologically well-defined historical period in which the nation's formation was completed; the period should be as ancient as possible for maximum prestige value."[83] Thus, the dates of origination were pushed to be created in accordance with the Soviet state's requirements of antiquity.

The aspirations for antiquity were aimed partly to compensate for historical Russian chauvinism, but also and more importantly to drive attention from recent troublesome history through the invocation of more ancient times. For example, the revolts organized by Kenesary Kasymov in Kazakhstan were "forgotten" along with epics that would raise questions about the Central Asian people's relations with Russians.[84] In Kyrgyzstan, the epic called *Manas*, named after a mythical Kyrgyz warrior, was banned, after having been supported by the Soviet leadership in the first three decades of the Soviet regime and even staged as a theatrical performance. The official ban was issued after the Soviet authorities had learned that the epic not only "recounts the history of major inter-tribal and inter-ethnic battles and victories… reflects the philosophy of national unity [and] depicts the Kyrgyz people's lifestyle and the value system of their societal relations" and that the epic's main hero, *Manas*, "perform[s] superhuman feats in defeating his enemies" and is believed to be an exemplar of the Kyrgyz people, but also that the epic narrates the Kyrgyz people's fight against oppressors at different points of their history and is referred to by dissident Kyrgyz.[85]

[83] Laruelle, "The concept of ethnogenesis in Central Asia," 175.
[84] Laruelle, "The concept of ethnogenesis in Central Asia," 172.
[85] Nevertheless, the Kyrgyz continued their tradition of narration of the epic in secret and *Manas* was preserved till the end of the Soviet Union and further. Erika Marat, "Imagined Past, Uncertain Future: The Creation of National Ideologies in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan." *Problems of Post-Communism*, 55 (2008) 15; Lowe, "Nation-building and Identity in the Kyrgyz Republic," 116.

The call for antiquity resulted in situations where Soviet works had to be later revised, as can be seen, for example, when the Shaybanid dynasty from which Uzbeks at first were believed to originate as a nation was later considered too recent and had to be corrected in the subsequent volumes of history books.[86] Tajikistan experienced even an odder situation, when the view of the Samanid dynasty, at first claimed to give birth to the Tajik nation, was later changed to having ended with them. The explanation behind this change,– that the Samanid rulers decided to satisfy the desire of sedentary Central Asian people to unify into a single nation called "Tajiks,"– caused a strong reaction from the Uzbek state, "who insisted that Tajik history be clearly contained within the borders of that union republic and that its ethnogenesis not intrude on its neighbors."[87] The examples discussed above show the great extent of artificiality and inconsistency that existed within the writing of national histories of Central Asian peoples, as well as how quickly the newly created states adopted the ideas of their belonging to the territories they were ascribed by the Soviet rulers.

In light of the discussed above findings, I see the Soviet trends in writing national histories resembling a Halbwachsian distinction of memory into "lived," or personally experienced, and "written," describing the distant past. The Soviet state put much effort into developing memory by writing down the histories of Central Asian people. However, unlike in Assmann's cultural memory which also refers to distant past, in the Soviet history making case, the history was not constructed by the communities and moreover, was not to be questioned or subject to change by the communities they were assigned to. In addition, similar to Halbawchs' omission of

[86] Laruelle, "The concept of ethnogenesis in Central Asia,"177.
[87] Laruelle, "The concept of ethnogenesis in Central Asia," 180.

reconciliation of present memories with the past, Soviet history writing ignored the recent history not suitable for the state, such as revolts against the Soviet regime.

The ideas of cultural uniqueness, antiquity, and belonging to territory were transmitted to the citizens of Central Asian states through various means ranging from art – "theatre, ballet, opera and film… given a Kyrgyz theme, while conforming to Soviet ideology" to "republican flag and national institutions such as academies, universities, trade unions and the Communist Party promoted to foster a sense of national pride."[88] One of the most significant means of spreading the named ideas about territory was teaching it, for "the school is central to the development and sustainability of community and communities, for it is the school that teaches moral consensus and creates social identity in places that cannot rely on family and hierarchies to achieve moral order."[89] Of all subjects, history was undeniably most crucial in the transmission of the state's political message. As the next section will show, the above discussed trends in Soviet historiography on Central Asian states are still in use in both post-Soviet history textbooks and people's narratives.

Teaching to "remember" and "forget"

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the narration of history in the newly independent Kyrgyzstan changed. Since the political system became more open, different and contradicting views began to be expressed in the school textbooks written and printed after 1991. First, the Marxist theoretical framework was completely taken out from the textbook narratives. However, new subdisciplines such as social history or cultural history were also absent. Second, the Soviet past began to be reconsidered: while some authors held that the Russian domination

[88] Lowe, "Nation-building and Identity in the Kyrgyz Republic,"110.
[89] Alan DeYoung *et al*, "Creating and Contesting Meanings of Place and Community in the Ylay Talaa Valley of Kyrgyzstan," 162.

was beneficial for the development of Kyrgyzstan into a modern industrialized country, others stressed in their textbooks that Kyrgyz lost significant part of their cultural authenticity by adopting Russian language and culture. The narratives in those textbooks reveal strong subjectivism of the authors in correlation with their ethnicity, age, sex, as well as personal experience of Soviet practices. Third, acknowledgement of the absence of territorial borders between the places of residence of Central Asian people began to take place. The history textbook entitled *History of the Kyrgyz and Kyrgyzstan*, written by a collective of leading Kyrgyz historians, recommended by the Kyrgyz National Academy of Sciences, and published in Kyrgyzstan in 1996 specifically states in its introduction that:

> It is impossible to write the history of Kyrgyzstan from the primordial times to the 20th century without considering cultural-historical links in Central Asia, as for many millennia, until the 1924-25 territorial delineation of former Turkestan, there were no fixed politico-administrative borders of settlement of ethnos; territorial formations of ancient nomad unions and khanates were quite amorphous.

The textbook then explains that "the territory of present Kyrgyzstan was part of different tribal or ancient state alliances, thus the history of this area in Tian-Shan is examined [in the textbook] only as a part of history of tribes and nations of Central Asia." The textbook concludes its introduction with that "it is impossible to study the history of modern Kyrgyzstan, as well as its particular *oblasts* and *raions* without taking into account the histories of neighboring states and nations."

Such an introduction looks very promising; however, the narration of the composite authors, – ten Kyrgyz, two Russians and one Dungan historians, – further in the textbook turns quite exclusivist, highlighting the antiquity of the Kyrgyz. In particular, it says that the ethnonym "Kyrgyz" is the most ancient among all nations of Turkic origin, compared to Uzbek, Uighur,

Kazakh, Turkmen, Tatar and others, who "emerged significantly later." To support this argument, the book refers to the state called "Kyrgyz" that existed in the end of the 3rd century BC. The birth of the Kyrgyz nation is attributed to the 15-16th centuries, described as "the finishing stage of consolidation of disconnected Kyrgyz tribes into an entirely new historical unity," which implied that Kyrgyz were always a nation, it is just that they were scattered across their territories. Such reference is probably the result of the Soviet legacy: while the Soviets paid much attention to the question of race with the aim to oppose the Nazi theories about pure races, they, paradoxically, at the same time promoted the view of a nation as a crystallized and fixed category, treating it as the "same" people across time.

Based on these assumptions, the book refers further in the chapters to ancient tribes whose genealogy is believed to constitute the Kyrgyz ethnicity as "ancient Kyrgyz." Perhaps there would be nothing wrong with such a terminology if it was not misleading: while the author calls the tribes related to modern Kyrgyz "ancient Kyrgyz," the other are called just tribes. For example, in the section about the ancient state Mogolistan that is believed to emerge in the 14th century in the territories of present South-East Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, it is stated: "Kyrgyz who lived in the eastern outskirts of Mogolistan, in Altai and Djungaria [an area of modern North-West China] gradually began to occupy the empty pastures, subordinating the remnants of the Mogol tribes whipped by Timur." Such a narrative clearly implies that Kyrgyz were a nation from times immemorial and thus had "legal" rights on the modern territory.

Another example is the description of the Kokand khanate. According to this 1996 textbook, the khanate was founded and ruled by Uzbek *biys* (leaders) on the Kyrgyz lands, who built many fortresses, and "by the end of the 18th century, almost all Kyrgyz territories of Fergana fell under the dependence of Kokand," which, in authors' view, was nothing but "expansion of Kokand

over the Kyrgyz." While the textbook section is called "Under the Yoke of the Kokand khanate" and points at the "feudal despotism of the typically Eastern monarchy,"– a trace of Soviet legacy, – it also notes that Kyrgyz were appointed to many important state positions without any explanation how this was possible if Kyrgyz were oppressed. The narrative characterizing Kyrgyz and Uzbeks as nations in the 18th century clearly derives from the Soviet propaganda of antiquity and prestige associated with it.

However, what emerged as a novelty was a reference in the post-Soviet textbooks to the epic *Manas*, and not just as to an epic, but as to a historically valid source. For example, in the discussion of origin of the Kyrgyz, this textbook says that there are two different views on the origin of the Kyrgyz: the first is that the Kyrgyz originate as a result of mixing of Siberian tribes who came to Tian-Shan with the local population and the second is that Kyrgyz have always lived in Tian-Shan. Then the textbook refers to the Kyrgyz epic by stating:

> The epic Manas offers some information on this question, it mentions that the Kyrgyz mainly were based in Altai, then in Ala-Too [the mountain range in the northern Tian-Shan], and later the river Talas [the river in the northern part of present Kyrgyzstan]. Therefore, the Kyrgyz nation itself does remember about moving to Tian-Shan, but not from Enisei, but instead from the place that are more close to its present homeland, Altai.

The introduction of the textbook mentions that the history of the Kyrgyz is an inseparable part of the general history of Central Asian people. As mentioned earlier, the textbook narrates about some of those people as being subordinate to Kyrgyz predecessors in terms of antiquity and "nativeness" to the present Kyrgyz territory. Interestingly, the author devotes a whole section to the discussion of the people of the Fergana valley, in which the present south of Kyrgyzstan lies, but does not make any links to the Kyrgyzstani Uzbeks.

For example, the authors stress that there was a state in Fergana already in the first millennium BC, with "developed settled-agricultural culture," and "the majority of Fergana dwellers lived in small villages in homesteads" and spoke "one of the Eastern-Iranian languages." All these descriptions characterize the ancestors of modern Uzbeks, however, the textbook does not mention this. It continues with that "in the foothills of Fergana, next to landowners, herdsmen always lived." This characteristics applies to the predecessors of modern Kyrgyz, which is not elaborated too. The textbook then suggests that "in the southern area of Kyrgyzstan in the early Middle Ages two large cities existed, Osh and Uzgen, well-known outside Fergana. In the 6th century cities and villages emerged in the northern area. They were built by emigrants from Sogd along the Silk Road route. In the 9-10th centuries Turki themselves begin building cities."

Such a narrative clearly states that people from Sogd, who are considered the ancestors of modern Uzbeks, were "emigrants," while the Turki, who are believed to contribute to the Kyrgyz ethnogenesis, were native. The section concludes that since the immigration of people from Sogd in the 6-7th centuries, "the interaction of two distinct cultures and their interosculation began, resulting in the enrichment of both." The authors of the textbook, however, omitted to explain in any way what relation the people of ancient Fergana had to the people currently inhabiting it. Later in the section on Kyrgyzstan's colonial experience, the authors explicitly call Uzbeks emigrants along with other peoples who, unlike Uzbeks, in fact emigrated to what later became Kyrgyz territories – Russians, Uighurs, Tatars, and Dungans.

Further, in the section of modern history, the textbook offers an analysis of the 1990 Kyrgyz-Uzbek conflict. At the beginning of 1990, ethnic Kyrgyz in the rural areas of the south of Kyrgyzstan experienced the difficulties provoked by an economic crisis in Kyrgyzstan more extremely than other residents in of the country. Cattle-, horse- and sheep-breeding, in which

southern Kyrgyz were traditionally engaged, were not commercially profitable, causing a shortage in jobs and housing. United into the independent movement called *Osh aimagy* (Osh region), Kyrgyz demanded from the local authorities lands on the outskirts of the city of Osh to create settlements.

After the authorities awarded part of an Uzbek collective farm to Kyrgyz settlers, Uzbeks, traditionally been engaged in land cultivation and commerce, responded with force, which mobilized both communities. The conflict was further inflamed by Uzbek leaders criticizing the policies of *korenizatsiia* while more radical members of the Uzbek community demanded "land swaps with Uzbekistan, or even autonomy if not outright secession" for the Uzbeks within the Osh region.[90] The authors of the textbook argue that the 1990 Kyrgyz-Uzbek conflict was provoked to an extent by economic issues. However, they note that although economics was undeniably a factor in the conflict, territorial claims of Kyrgyz for the Uzbek collective farm, met by the claims for Kyrgyz state's territories from the Uzbeks, were at the core the conflict. They explain this statement by pointing that a similar practice of land distribution took place in northern Kyrgyzstan, specifically around the capital Bishkek, where the Russian population was dominant in relation to Kyrgyz. However, according to the authors, the Russians did not demand land for they "did not consider it a historical land of their ancestors," which was not the case for the Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan.[91] However, the textbook does not offer a detailed analysis of why this was the case for Russians. Neither does it acknowledge that the conflict can be traced to the institutionalization of territorial and the *korenizatsiia* nationality programs, which linked

[90] Matteo Fumagalli, "Framing Ethnic Minority Mobilisation in Central Asia: The cases of Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan." *Europe-Asia Studies* 59 (2007) 582.
[91] *History of Kyrgyz and Kyrgyzstan* p.277-78.

the so-called titular nation to its assigned territory and promoted its cultural exclusiveness and antiquity.

Apart from differentiating views on the Soviet past, the main trends in historiography, – that there exists an inseparable and centuries-old link between the Kyrgyz and their prescribed lands – mainly remained in place in the new history books, therefore continuing the tradition of "remembering" and "forgetting" national history in Kyrgyzstan. However, the content and dynamics of these trends changed. History, therefore, continues to be used for political and cultural purposes "to serve as evidence of a people's historical and cultural continuity and thereby proof of those people's legitimacy and cultural value in the present."

To sum up, textbooks are a powerful source of what constitutes people's memory, as indicated by several interviewees educated in the Soviet times referring to textbooks. Aiperi, a 50-year old housewife from Osh, brought the discussion of territories in ancient times when answering a question on the reasons for the 2010 conflict in her city:

> Osh, Fergana, Andijan, Samarkand – these were all in the Kokand khanate, thus a question arises: where is Uzbekistan here? Russians just took Kyrgyz, Tajik and Karakalpak territories and artificially created Uzbekistan. There even was not such a nation as Uzbeks, they are imaginary, fictitious. Kokand khanate was Kyrgyz land, according to history. This is how it is written in the history textbooks, right?
>
> In ancient times, during the summer, Kyrgyz would go to the pastures in the mountains and come back in winter. By that time, Uzbeks were only arriving to these lands in search of artisanal work. When Russians came, they began to oppress rich Kyrgyz cattle-breeders, *biys*, and the *biys* gradually began to leave their lowland lands and hide in the mountains. Uzbek artisans stayed, and it were Russians who gave them the name "Uzbek." Until then, these were people with unidentified ethnicity.
>
> Russians divided the territories as they wished. If they lived here, they would know where Kyrgyz are and where Uzbeks are, and how the lands between them should be divided.

Given the findings discussed so far, one can conclude that Soviet national policies were self-contradictory. On the one hand, the Soviets were afraid of Kyrgyz becoming nationalist and

consequently challenging the hegemony of the Soviet state. On the other hand, the Soviets themselves encouraged the Kyrgyz to develop nationalism so as to differentiate Soviet rule from the Tsarist rule. The outcome of both goals was ambiguous as well. The Kyrgyz did not develop a sense of the nation to the degree of the peoples of the Caucasus or the Balkans. However, it is fair to say that they developed a sense of nationality stronger than at any other time in Kyrgyz history, namely, due to the territorial and political policies which were practiced nearly for 70 years, Kyrgyz became persuaded that: "(1) There exists an ancient and glorious Kyrgyz nation to which the indigenous population of Kyrgyzstan belongs; (2) Kyrgyz [are] representatives of the indigenous nation [and] live on the territory of their national state; (3) the republic, its resources, the state and other institutions are the property of the Kyrgyz nation."[92]

The evidence of successful learning of these Soviet dogmas, owed largely to *korenizatsiia* program, the politics of "remembering" and "forgetting" the national history, as well as to the ideological vacuum in the Soviet Union's declining years and Gorbachev's introduction of *perestroika*, can be seen in the conflict of Kyrgyz with Uzbeks in the south of Kyrgyzstan in 1990. This conflict resulted in more than three hundred deaths and was one the most violent in the Soviet Union.[93]

[92] Valerii Tishkov, "Don't' Kill Me, I'm a Kyrgyz!" *Journal of Peace Research*, 32 (1995), 133-147.
[93] Glenn, *The Soviet Legacy in Central Asia*, 2; Tishkov, "Don't' Kill Me, I'm a Kyrgyz!" 134.

Chapter II. Independence and dynamics of development of the Kyrgyz-Uzbek interrelations in Kyrgyzstan from 1991 to 2010

> High mountains, valleys and fields
> Are our native, holy land.
> Our fathers lived amidst the Ala-Too,
> Always saving their motherland.
>
> Come on, Kyrgyz people,
> Come on to freedom!
> Stand up and flourish!
> Create your fortune!
>
> (National Anthem of the Kyrgyz Republic)

With the collapse of Soviet rule and Kyrgyzstan's acquisition of independence, the newly established Kyrgyz state continued the nationalist course established by the Soviets. Furthermore, Kyrgyzstan adopted a number of new national programs and ideologies which negatively affected the relations between the Kyrgyz and the Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan. In order to understand why these programs and ideologies fanned conflict, the chapter will (1) discuss the national policies and other political actions adopted by new Kyrgyz authorities towards both Kyrgyz and ethnic minorities, – Uzbeks in particular. The chapter will then (2) examine how state national programs shaped the views of Kyrgyz and Uzbeks towards each other and study the turning points in their relations when the country experienced critical situations linked to territory, such as the disputed border between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and the intrusion of the radical Islamic organization from Uzbekistan. Finally, the chapter will conclude by (3) arguing that territory-related questions were crucial in shaping the views of Kyrgyz and Uzbeks about each other.

Nation-building in Kyrgyzstan in the first years of independence

Choosing the national ideology

The 1990 Osh conflict provided an opportunity for Askar Akayev, – a physicist and former head of the National Academy of Sciences,– to win the first presidential elections in the Kyrgyz SSR in 1990 and consequently in newly independent Kyrgyzstan in 1991. Akayev was able to build a broad coalition of two mutually exclusive groups, – Kyrgyz nationalists and ethnic minorities. Taking the role of the protector of minority rights, Akayev successfully relied on the loyalty of Kyrgyzstan's numerous minorities, Uzbeks in particular, as observed in both parliamentary and presidential elections.[94] Akayev's ethnic and civic national programs are examined in the sections below.

"Manas" national program

The national program put into practice by the first president was based on ethnosymbolism, which Smith sees as history, language, signs and personalities with which an ethnic group identifies itself.[95] These elements give people a sense of commonality through the myths of a common ancestor, common history and traditions. However, in the Kyrgyz case it was unclear what ideas should be promoted as "national." Because the Kyrgyz did not write down their literary works, Kyrgyz history is hazy and does not narrate any liberation movement or experience of self-governance. As a result, there is no undisputable outstanding personality to

[94] Fumagalli, "Framing Ethnic Minority Mobilisation in Central Asia," 574.
[95] Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

appeal to in order to encourage the Kyrgyz, using Brubaker's words, "to nationalize," i.e. to promote "political hegemony of the state-bearing nation."[96]

However, oral folklore, – namely the tradition to narrate folk epics from generation to generation, – persisted. The most popular epic is called *Manas*, named after a mythical Kyrgyz warrior. "The epic recounts the history of major inter-tribal and inter-ethnic battles and victories… reflects the philosophy of national unity [and] depicts the Kyrgyz people's lifestyle and the value system of their societal relations."[97] The epic's main hero, *Manas*, "perform[s] superhuman feats in defeating his enemies" and is believed to be "the father and moral exemplar of the Kyrgyz people."[98] The absence of written history and national heroes prompted President Akayev to make the image of *Manas* the main symbol of his national ideology.

President Akayev put much effort to make the "invention of tradition" of *Manas* a widely accepted element of the Kyrgyz identity.[99] For example, with the support of UNESCO, he declared the year 1995 the "International Year of *Manas*" and initiated mass celebration of the supposed 1000th anniversary of *Manas*. The celebrations were followed by national dances, games, and plays as well as the placement of a giant yurt - a round felt tent, traditional house of nomadic Kyrgyz - in the center of the venue, thus symbolizing the greatness and glory of the ethnic Kyrgyz.[100] In his books and speeches, the president argued that the Kyrgyz nation is ancient and its history numbers thousands of years. Akayev stated that the role of *Manas* epic for the Kyrgyz

[96] Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 46.
[97] Marat, "Imagined Past, Uncertain Future," 15.
[98] Lowe, "Nation-building and Identity in the Kyrgyz Republic," 116.
[99] Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions" in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-14.
[100] The house, in traditional Kyrgyz culture, was a source of pride for men, who had to be very skilful to make the structure of *yurt* of wood, and for women, who also had to be skilful enough to make a good quality felt with which to cover the structure and artistic to decorate the house patterns, colourful tassels, felt carpets and embroidered wall hangings. Practically, the *yurt* provided its dwellers with warmth in winter and cool in summer, and, most importantly for nomads, its light construction was easily transportable.

was as vital as that of the New Testament for Christians. To support his arguments, Akayev recalled that in the Soviet time *Manas* was banned by the Soviet authorities so as to, – according to the president, – play down the position of the Kyrgyz.[101] Therefore, Akayev's appeals to memory can be regarded as appeals to what Assmann called cultural and communicative memories. Akayev was referring to cultural memory - which deals with distant past and is a "collective experience… whose meaning, when touched upon, may suddenly become accessible again across millennia" - when he promoted *Manas* as his national policy. Furthermore, the president was appealing the communicative memory, which deals with personal remembrances and everyday experiences of the recent past, when he "reminded" that *Manas* was banned under the Soviet regime. Thereby, Akayev to an extent made the epic that initially used to serve as a source of learning and entertainment a symbol of independence and freedom. This case confirms another Assmann's idea, that despite its fixity, cultural memory is under constant construction and reconstruction, because it tends to appropriate or change the meaning of the figures of memory according to its current context and needs.[102]

The celebration of *Manas* in 1995 was held just a few months before the presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan. Akayev drew in the country's political elites, scholars, and even sports teams for the preparations thereby depriving the other presidential candidates any possibility to promote their election campaigns, since almost the entire public sector was busy with preparations of celebration.[103] Moreover, anyone who opposed the *Manas* program was accused by Akayev as unpatriotic. This newly chosen national ideology served as his public relations campaign. When Kyrgyzstan's economy started improving after the early 1990s crisis, Akayev

[101] Marat, "Imagined Past, Uncertain Future," 16.
[102] Assmann and John Czaplicka, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," 128-130.
[103] Marat, "Imagined Past, Uncertain Future," 16.

quickly linked the recovery with the overall rising sense of the nation and with "signs of the power of the *Manas* ideals."[104]

"Kyrgyzstan is Our Common Home" national program

In addition to the fiercely ethnic *Manas* national program, Akayev, granted Kyrgyz citizenship to all dwellers, irrespective of their ethnicity and language, and conducted an inclusive national program called *Kyrgyzstan is Our Common Home*.[105] Akayev's aim in the program was to get the support of some of the hundred nationalities resident in the country. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan was one of the most multinational states in the post-Soviet era. The ethnic Kyrgyz barely constituted a majority, – a little more than 50 per cent of the whole population. The Uzbeks and Russians were the largest minority groups constituting 13 and 21 per cent respectively.[106] The program aimed to emphasize the importance of the non-Kyrgyz peoples in Kyrgyzstan. Its realization was launched through the creation of a so-called "Assembly of the Peoples of Kyrgyzstan" designed to give minorities, – among them Uzbeks, – the opportunity to participate in the country's political and cultural life. Famous Kyrgyz scholars and writers took part in gatherings of the Assembly, and local mass media provided extensive coverage to its events.[107] However, in practice, the Assembly was, a "toothless" organization, since its activity produced nothing more than the gatherings and discussions and did not yield any actions.[108]

[104] Marat, "Imagined Past, Uncertain Future," 16.
[105] Regina Faranda and David B. Nolle, "Ethnic Social Distance in Kyrgyzstan: Evidence from a Nationwide Opinion Survey". *Nationalities Papers*, 31 (2003), 177.
[106] Fumagalli, "Framing Ethnic Minority Mobilisation in Central Asia," 574. At present, Uzbeks constitute the largest minority in Kyrgyzstan.
[107] Marat, "Imagined Past, Uncertain Future," 14.
[108] Nick Megoran, "The Critical Geopolitics of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan Ferghana Valley Boundary Dispute, 1999-2000." *Political Geography*, 23 (2004) 754.

At the same time, Akayev, in his public speeches, spoke of citizenship and civic rights as primary in comparison to ethnicity.[109] This, however, was a political maneuver rather than the actual state of affairs. The emphasis on citizenship and civic rights was most likely intended to garner the international, mainly Western, support, primarily financial aid. In fact, portraying Kyrgyzstan as a nascent democratic state was Akayev's main tactic for drawing international donors and sponsors.[110] It should be noted, however, that in Kyrgyzstan there were political opposition and relatively free press as well as a vibrant civil society and non-governmental organizations, unlike in the other four, more authoritarian Central Asian states.[111]

Despite the president's programs and speeches about inclusive, civic nationalism, the Kyrgyz state headed by Akayev often promoted ethnic nationalism in secret. For example, out of fear of discontent by the Russians and Uzbeks, the president vetoed a land law enacted by the parliament, which declared that Kyrgyzstan's territory and natural resources belonged to the ethnic Kyrgyz. Nevertheless, to address Kyrgyz fears that other ethnic groups would be more successful than the Kyrgyz, Akayev promulgated a decree that earmarked half of the land privatized after the collapse of the Soviet Union for ethnic Kyrgyz farmers. It was safe for Akayev to do so, since "the newly privatized land was to be taken initially from marginal collective farms."[112] Thereby, this action symbolized the dominance of the Kyrgyz without causing a substantial loss for the Uzbeks and other peoples.[113]

[109] Marat, "Imagined Past, Uncertain Future,"13-14.
[110] Martha Olcott, *Central Asia's New States: Independence, Foreign Policy, and Regional Security* (Washington, DC: Unites States Institute of Peace, 1996), 87-97.
[111] Regine A. Spektor, "The Transformation of Askar Akayev, the President of Kyrgyzstan." (Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies working paper series. University of California, Berkeley 2004).
[112] Huskey, "Kyrgyzstan: The Fate of Political Liberalization," 254-255.
[113] Huskey, "Kyrgyzstan: The Fate of Political Liberalization," 254-255.

Another example of concealed promotion of Kyrgyz ethnic nationalism to counterbalance the open civic activities is the electoral system of Kyrgyzstan. After 1993 the system was changed in such a way so as to hamper participation of Uzbeks and other minorities in state politics. First, the number of members in the unicameral Kyrgyz assembly was diminished from 350 to 105. While it was justified as the result of the economic crisis, in reality it was intended to lessen the representation of ethnic minorities. After the reduction of parliamentary seats, larger districts were created, where compact non-Kyrgyz areas were blended with ethnic Kyrgyz districts. As a result, "with voters casting ballots in seventy single-member districts for the Legislative Assembly, minority candidates faced structural barriers that would not have been present if Kyrgyzstan had introduced proportional representation or a larger number of single-member seats." Predictably, ethnic minorities, – who by that time constituted 42 per cent of the population - won only 18 per cent of seats in the 1995 parliamentary election. Meanwhile, six per cent belonged to Uzbeks.[114]

By implementing the promotion of the *Manas* epic and camouflaged ethnic national programs, Akayev promoted nationalism, which "consists of political activities that aim to make the boundaries of the nation... coterminous with those of the state."[115] The link between the nation and the political territory, according to Hechter, is made for the benefit of the public good, such as "order, justice, social welfare, and defense in a territorially bounded society"; as I see it in the case of Kyrgyz, – land and political advantage.[116]

Thus, after gaining independence, the Kyrgyz state adopted two different types of national policies. One policy used an ethnic character (*Manas*) and was often concealed (land privatization

[114] Huskey, "Kyrgyzstan: The Fate of Political Liberalization," 259-60, 263.
[115] Michael Hechter, *Containing Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
[116] Hechter, *Containing Nationalism*, *7*.

and legal framework). The second policy was inclusive and civic (*Kyrgyzstan is Our Common Home*) and was promoted only on paper or in words, but never in practice. The effect of these two different state policies on Kyrgyz-Uzbek relations will be demonstrated in the section below by examining the most difficult moments in the history of independent Kyrgyzstan, both linked to territorial issues: the border dispute with Uzbekistan and the invasion of radical Islamist guerrillas into the country.

Kyrgyz national programs in action

As discussed in the first chapter, the borders between the Central Asian states, namely between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, were delineated only in the Soviet period. Although the border lines were delineated somewhat ambiguously, this did not present a problem while both countries were integrated into the Soviet Union.[117] However, with the break-up of the Soviet Union, the situation changed dramatically. The precise border delineation became a serious problem for Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, since neither of the two was inclined to let the other have any of the thousands of disputed hectares along the 870 kilometer boundary. As Megoran's analysis of Kyrgyz newspapers shows, the situation reached its critical moment in 1999, when the Uzbek state headed by an authoritarian president Islam Karimov began to raise "a two-meter high barbed-wire perimeter fence along… the [Kyrgyz-Uzbek] boundary" and mine the adjacent plots.[118] This resulted in mass indignation among the ethnic Kyrgyz thinking that Uzbekistan was stealing the Kyrgyz land. The border has not been regulated since then, and the view of the

[117] Bond and Koch, "Interethnic Tensions in Kyrgyzstan: a Political Geographic Perspective," 543; Fumagalli, "Framing Ethnic Minority Mobilisation in Central Asia," 572.
[118] Nick Megoran, "The Critical Geopolitics of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan Ferghana Valley Boundary Dispute, 1999-2000". *Political Geography*, 23 (2004) 733-734.

Uzbeks as invaders continues to exist among the Kyrgyz. Ainagul, a 50-year old female Kyrgyz veterinarian from Osh, shared in her interview:

> - Russia cleverly gave the status of autonomous republics to the nations within itself so as to avoid potential conflicts, but for us they did not do so, just lumped everyone together.
>
> - Do you mean that Kyrgyzstani Uzbeks should be given an autonomy?
>
> - No, why should we give them autonomy?! If they have occupied all the territories already. For example, if you want to go from Osh to Jalalabad, you have to pass through Uzgen. But there used to be a direct Osh-Jalalabad road. Uzbeks closed this road, now it's on the territory of Uzbekistan. Kyrgyzstan was deprived of its one or two *raions*, they forced Kyrgyz to take Uzbek passports in order to cease the territory. I don't remember when exactly the road was closed, my family used it for the last time in 2001.

This interview shows that Ainagul – as many other Kyrgyz respondents – did not distinguish between Uzbek ethnicity and Uzbek citizenship, a legacy of the Soviet practice of *korenizatsiia*. Ainagul's narrative sharply contrasts to that of Nilyufer, a 45-year old Uzbek housewife from Uzgen, who shared in her interview:

> In Uzbekistan all ethnicities live in peace - Koreans, Russians. We have lived in Kyrgyzstan from the very beginning, we are not the first generation, our parents were based here. Where should we go now? We cannot abandon our home. We were born here, our children were too. A place where a person was born is his homeland, Kyrgyzstan is our homeland. We want peace, nothing else. [119]

Nilyufer's mention of Koreans and Russians is not accidental. These two are known as relatively recent emigrant populations in Kyrgyzstan. By bringing them into discussion, Nilyufer emphasizes that Uzbeks have a longer history in the territory of Kyrgyzstan and that Kyrgyzstan is their home. As her phrasing implies, however, it is not quite a real home for Koreans and Russians. Furthermore, telling that Uzbeks "want peace, nothing else" could imply that Uzbeks have no territorial or language claims.

[119] Interestingly, these two interviews were the only cases when the interviewees mentioned Russia and Russians.

Akayev's opposition was quick in disseminating this view through the local media to challenge the president, causing tensions to be stirred between the ordinary Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan. In particular, Akayev's national program *Kyrgyzstan is Our Common Home* became the main target of the opposition press. For instance, the newspaper *Aalam*, in an article entitled "Kyrgyzstan—here today, gone tomorrow?" wrote: "The slogan 'Kyrgyzstan is our common home' has sunk deep into the hearts of everyone… Another 10–15 years of this 'politics of hospitality' and it is possible that we will not be able to find our border at all. But, thanks be to God, we have a number of deputies who take up this matter," the article then narrated several of the alleged virtues of the opposition leaders.[120]

Another example can be found in the opposition newspaper *Res Publica* which expressed the idea that Uzbekistan was Kyrgyzstan's rival rather than a partner, since it "intruded" into Kyrgyz territories. The discussion of the policies of the neighboring state moved to *Res Publica* advocating the idea that Kyrgyzstan would become an exemplary state when its population becomes "ethnically and linguistically homogenous."[121]

However, despite the mass emigration of Russians and other European national minorities after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the ethnic Kyrgyz still constituted roughly 60 per cent. Furthermore, in the 2000s, after almost ten years since the law on state language declared Kyrgyz the "state language," Kyrgyzstan was far from being linguistically homogenous due to still large number of Russians and Uzbeks. In fact, shortly after the law on state language, Akayev gave Russian the status of the "official language" or, as it is also called, "the language of inter-

[120] *Aalam* cited in Megoran, "The Critical Geopolitics of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan Ferghana Valley Boundary Dispute, 1999-2000," 748-749.
[121] *Res Publica* cited in Megoran, "The Critical Geopolitics of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan Ferghana Valley Boundary Dispute, 1999-2000," 750.

ethnic communication."[122] The article concluded that the vulnerability of Kyrgyzstan's borders signified the weakness of the ethnic Kyrgyz as a nation, which by-turn was a result of Akayev's incompetence in the nation-building processes and the national program *Kyrgyzstan is Our Common Home* in particular.[123]

From the examples given above, it can be surmised that despite being critical of Akayev's civic policies, the opposition leaders were more preoccupied with winning the political competition of the presidency rather than the changing the national programs. The opposition challenged the personality of the president instead of proposing their own solution for the border problem showing that the opposition did not realize the impact of national policies. Thus, their main goal was to challenge Akayev and, as far as possible, to come to power.

The Kyrgyz government, in turn, responded through the press and initially in a civic manner. For instance, in honor of the 5th anniversary of "The Assembly of the Peoples of Kyrgyzstan" in 1999, the state newspaper *Erkin Too* published an article entitled "Kyrgyzstan is Our Common Home," narrating the work of the different ethnic departments. The work of the Uzbek department was praised in another newspaper called *O'sh Sadosi*. The border question was covered as a problem that the Kyrgyz government would gradually amend. Moreover, the press – for example, *Kirgiz Tuusu* - stated that some progress had been already made: "the government of Kyrgyzstan is ceaselessly working to delimit our independent country's border. The experts working on this strongly believe that the border is an easily wounded living organism that demands careful treatment." In addition, the newspaper concluded in civic tones and assured the reader in the safety of Kyrgyz state borders:

[122] Megoran, "The Critical Geopolitics of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan Ferghana Valley Boundary Dispute, 1999-2000," 750; Lowe, "Nation-building and Identity in the Kyrgyz Republic," 118.
[123] Megoran, "The Critical Geopolitics of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan Ferghana Valley Boundary Dispute, 1999-2000," 750-751.

> "If you don't know, we will tell you something wonderful: we have one goal, the sacred wish—'Kyrgyzstan is our common home'. More one hundred nationalities are laboring to turn this home into a blossoming country. That they might dwell in peace, our border guards are watching over them. By day and night, in heat and cold, our vigilant young heroes are standing firm at the border."[124]

However, the Kyrgyz government's civic statements changed the same year, when the state encountered territorial issues, namely the insurgence of the guerrillas of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) - the main violent non-state actor in Central Asia - in Batken, Kyrgyzstan's southern region.[125] In addition to Batken region, IMU attacked the Vorukh and Sokh enclaves, also in the south. These are small territories belonging to neighboring Uzbekistan and Tajikistan respectively, but located in the mountainous territory of Kyrgyzstan, with little or no road communication to their respective states.[126] The IMU sought to establish an Islamic state in the above-mentioned territories of Kyrgyzstan, as these were the poorest regions in the country and thus most prone to support the IMU, which had been involved in organized crime, namely trading Afghan drugs through other countries to finance its military adventures.[127] Consequently the IMU seized some hostages and demanded a $50,000 ransom from the Kyrgyz government. This crisis caught the Kyrgyz government by surprise, "exposing the absolute failure of intelligence services, the wretched state of the armed forces, and the almost non-existent border control regime."[128]

Seeking the people's support in overcoming the crisis, the Kyrgyz authorities began to appeal to the cult of *Manas,* thereby bringing ethnic, Kyrgyz nationalism to the center of the

[124] Kirgiz Tuusu cited in Megoran, "The Critical Geopolitics of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan Ferghana Valley Boundary Dispute, 1999-2000," 755.
[125] Svante E. Cornell "Narcotics, Radicalism, and Armed Conflict in Central Asia: The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan." *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 17 (2005) 579.
[126] Cornell "Narcotics, Radicalism, and Armed Conflict in Central Asia," 585.
[127] Cornell "Narcotics, Radicalism, and Armed Conflict in Central Asia," 581.
[128] Megoran, "The Critical Geopolitics of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan Ferghana Valley Boundary Dispute, 1999-2000," 755.

public discussions. At the same time, they had easily, to use Renan's wording, "forgotten" about the civic kind of nationalism embraced in the *Kyrgyzstan is Our Common Home* program, which they had been promoting just a few months before the invasion of the IMU.[129] For example, while speaking to the soldiers, Akayev said to them: "You are the noble offspring of our illustrious father *Manas*!" and "prayed that the spirit of *Manas* would protect them."[130]

Furthermore, following the IMU insurgence, the opposition framed a view through the local media that the Uzbeks living in the south of Kyrgyzstan were somehow linked to the IMU guerrillas. Although they did not say it openly, the articles in the newspapers supposed such a view. For example, the *Asaba* newspaper was preoccupied with a village *Surut Tash* bordering Uzbekistan, where there was no border post and the Uzbeks had close connections with their friends and families in Uzbekistan.[131] This reminds us of Kymlicka's theory of "securitization" of a minority. The minority is seen by a state as a potential security threat, "or as potentially disloyal, or simply as unalterably "alien."[132] This is not only because the minority (Uzbeks) has a "kin-state" (Uzbekistan), but because this minority is seen as collaborating with this state so as to undermine the majority's (Kyrgyz) state.[133] The fact which could contribute to greater persuasion of the Kyrgyz in Uzbeks' presumable involvement in the IMU is that although both Kyrgyz and Uzbeks are Muslims, Uzbeks are commonly perceived as more religious. For example, Uzbek women mostly wear head coverings, whereas Kyrgyz women usually do not.[134]

[129] Renan, "What is a Nation?"
[130] Megoran, "The Critical Geopolitics of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan Ferghana Valley Boundary Dispute, 1999-2000," 756.
[131] Megoran, "The Critical Geopolitics of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan Ferghana Valley Boundary Dispute, 1999-2000," 752.
[132] Will Kymlicka,"Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe" in *Can liberal pluralism be exported? Western political theory and ethnic relations in Eastern Europe,* eds. Will Kymlicka and Magda Opalski (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 40.
[133] Kymlicka,"Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe," 66.
[134] Kirchik, "Dispatch from the Knife's Edge: The Coming Kyrgyzstan Catastrophe," 17.

Thereby, the critical moment related to territory, – namely the Batken hostage crisis, – testified to the government's willingness to use ethnic nationalism at the expense of civic nationalism as an expedient to achieve political goals. This corroborates Mann's idea that a democratic government system leads to the domination of one ethnicity in the state. This system creates the situation where ethnic majorities, "in control of the state… believe it should express [their] needs… [and] not those of minorities."[135] The situation also showed that the Soviet legacy, – namely the programs which institutionalized Kyrgyz nationhood such as "titular" nation and *korenizatsiia*, – continued to mold the national question in Kyrgyzstan.

The impact of Kyrgyz national policies on the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks' perception of each other

With the Kyrgyz government's unbalanced national policies focused on ethnic rather than civic nationalism, one would suppose that Uzbeks would mobilize against the Kyrgyz or that at least the views of the two peoples towards each other would became greatly negative. However, while the former did not happen for the reasons explained later, the latter is only partially true.

The results of the 2003 public inquiry, based aimed at finding how members of each major ethnic group in the country relate to one another, a year after the border crisis and the removal of the IMU from Kyrgyzstan, presented in the research paper by Faranda and Nolle, show the following data. Most likely as a result of the greater promotion of ethnic national programs over civic programs and anti-Uzbek propaganda through the local media, Kyrgyz viewed Uzbeks much more negatively (see Table 2.1), while Uzbeks' views of Kyrgyz were much more positive (see Table 2.2).[136]

As follows from the data in the tables, while 95 per cent of Uzbeks were ready to accept the Kyrgyz as a neighbor, only 57.9 per cent of Kyrgyz were ready to accept Uzbeks in the same

[135] Mann, "Explaining Murderous Ethnic Cleansing: The Macro-Level," 236.
[136] Faranda and Nolle, "Ethnic Social Distance in Kyrgyzstan."

position. 92.6 per cent of Uzbeks were ready to accept a Kyrgyz as a friend, whereas only 47.2 per cent of Kyrgyz were ready to accept an Uzbek in the same role. Finally, 52.5 per cent of Uzbeks were ready to accept Kyrgyz as a relative through marriage and only 17.3 per cent of Kyrgyz were ready to do the same for the Uzbeks.

TABLE 2.1
Acceptance of different relationships with Uzbeks by Kyrgyz (Kyrgyzstan, 2001)

		Ethnicity **Kyrgyz** (%)
To have Uzbek as a neighbor	Yes	57.9
	No	38.4
	(Refused to answer)	1.9
	(I find it hard to say)	1.3
	(No response)	0.6
	Total	100.0
To have Uzbek as a friend	Yes	47.2
	No	48.0
	(Refused to answer)	2.5
	(I find it hard to say)	1.7
	(No response)	0.6
	Total	100.0
To have Uzbek as a close relation through marriage	Yes	17.3
	No	76.1
	(Refused to answer)	2.3
	(I find it hard to say)	3.5
	(No response)	0.7
	Total	100.0

TABLE 2.2
Acceptance of different relationships with Kyrgyz by Uzbeks (Kyrgyzstan, 2001)

		Ethnicity **Uzbek** (%)
To have Kyrgyz as a neighbor	Yes	95.0
	No	2.8
	(Refused to answer)	0.0
	(I find it hard to say)	2.2
	Total	100.0
To have Kyrgyz as a friend	Yes	92.6
	No	5.4
	(Refused to answer)	0.0
	(I find it hard to say)	2.0
	Total	100.0
To have Kyrgyz as a close relation through marriage	Yes	52.5
	No	37.4
	(Refused to answer)	1.1
	(I find it hard to say)	7.7
	(No response)	1.4
	Total	100.0

Source: Faranda, R. and Nolle, D., 2003. "Ethnic Social Distance in Kyrgyzstan: Evidence from a Nationwide Opinion Survey." Nationalities Papers, 31 (2), 177-210.

The statistic discussed above raises a question: why is there such a big divergence between the views of Kyrgyz and Uzbeks? Faranda and Nolle explain the viewpoint of the Kyrgyz by pointing at the social distance which emerges in the conditions of "declining or depressed economic circumstances: [people] look for scapegoats, usually finding them in their society's main ethnic or religious out-group... Kyrgyz who say the current economic situation in the country is either very bad or bad are the most distant from Uzbeks."[137] However, the authors do not discuss why Uzbeks viewed Kyrgyz positively in the time when the opinion survey was conducted. I argue that it was due to the shift in perception of territory in the Uzbek community. As mentioned before, Uzbeks had very close ties with their friends and families in Uzbekistan. This closeness was due to the absence of borders between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in Soviet times, which made Uzbeks' perception of Kyrgyz citizenship unimportant.[138] However, the situation changed greatly with the 1999 border crisis, when Uzbekistan toughened the process of crossing the border for Kyrgyz citizens, regardless of their ethnicity. To put it simply, the Uzbek border guards would not let Kyrgyzstanis, – regardless of their ethnicity, – enter Uzbek territory and were not required to provide a reason.

Thereby, as the studies by both Megoran show, the issue of state borders is not just about the border itself, – it also can signify the nationalist moods of the state, namely its views regarding "who should be included in the nation and who should be excluded."[139] Thus, the authoritarian Uzbek state defined the ethnic Uzbek "as coterminous with the newly-independent nation-state,

[137] Faranda and Nolle, "Ethnic Social Distance in Kyrgyzstan," 186.
[138] Fumagalli, "Framing Ethnic Minority Mobilisation in Central Asia," 568.
[139] Megoran, "The Critical Geopolitics of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan Ferghana Valley Boundary Dispute, 1999-2000," 736.

demarcated by new boundaries."[140] At the same time, "Uzbek minorities in adjacent states [were regarded as] marginal not only to Uzbekistan but to the revivalist project of Uzbekness itself."[141] As a result, numerous Uzbeks from Kyrgyzstan who tried to cross the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border and were refused entrance criticized the Uzbek government for its national policies. Thus, after "paying the consequences" of the actions of the Uzbek state, Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan became more willing to integrate to Kyrgyzstani society and develop attachment to Kyrgyzstan.[142] The case discussed above corroborates Bonnemaison's theory that attachments to places that are of high importance to people's psychological and physical well-being and that memory of territory is so strong that even when the place of attachment ceases to exist, people tend to deplore its loss.[143]

Furthermore, as shown in another Megoran's study based on interviews with Kyrgyz and Uzbeks on the influence of the border disputes between the Kyrgyz and the Uzbek states, the majority considered Kyrgyzstan to be more democratic than Uzbekistan and thus better to live in.[144] As Megoran supposed, it therefore signified "a positive identification with Kyrgyzstan that might even perhaps be termed national pride, and is a clear expression of divergence from Uzbekistan."[145] This helps to understand the unequal perceptions of the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks of each other, which demonstrated that after the border conflict between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in 1999, Uzbeks were willing to integrate into Kyrgyz society, in a sharp contrast to Kyrgyz who found it difficult to accept Uzbeks as a part of the Kyrgyzstani society.

[140] Nick Megoran, "On Researching 'Ethnic Conflict': Epistemology, Politics, and a Central Asian Boundary Dispute." *Europe-Asia Studies*, 59 (2007), 13.
[141] Megoran, "On Researching 'Ethnic Conflict," 13.
[142] Megoran, "On Researching 'Ethnic Conflict," 18.
[143] Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History.*
[144] Megoran, "On Researching 'Ethnic Conflict," 13.
[145] Megoran, "On Researching 'Ethnic Conflict," 20.

In addition, there was a general consensus among the Uzbeks that although Akayev might be weak, there were no better alternatives for the presidency, since no other politician spoke out about protecting ethnic minorities and Uzbeks in particular. Therefore, while making complaints about the president's unbalanced national policies, Uzbeks nevertheless remained loyal to Akayev and supported him in elections.[146]

Change of power in Kyrgyzstan: "clan governance" and shift in national policies

"Clan governance"

While the Uzbeks were not satisfied with Akayev's policies but still retained the hope for the president, the Kyrgyz living in the south were of another opinion. The "southerners" were greatly displeased with the president's clan governance due to the concentration of power into his family's hands that became more evident with time. Thereby, whereas by the beginning of the 1990s they supported the president, in 2005 it was widely accepted among "southerners" that Akayev granted political power only to the members of his "northern" clan, thus depriving the "southern" clans of political participation.[147] In fact, as Morozova notes, "northerners" also happened to be deprived of important positions in the government.[148] Nevertheless, the idea of deprivation of the southerners was successfully used by southern opposition leaders to mobilize the southern Kyrgyz and to initiate the so-called Tulip Revolution in the spring of 2005 which ousted Akayev and brought a new president, Bakiyev.[149]

[146] Fumagalli, "Framing Ethnic Minority Mobilisation in Central Asia," 578.
[147] Bond and Koch, "Interethnic Tensions in Kyrgyzstan: a Political Geographic Perspective," 538.
[148] Morozova, "Regional Factor in Intra-Elite Rivalry in Present Kyrgyzstan," 65.
[149] Maxim Ryabkov, "The North-South Cleavage and Political Support in Kyrgyzstan." *Central Asian Survey*, 27 (2008), 306.

It is important to note that the change of power came from top-down rather than from bottom-up pressure and thus indicates an intra-Kyrgyz rivalry rather than "an institutional overhaul."[150] That is, the competition between the "southern" and "northern" Kyrgyz is the competition of people belonging to the same ethnic background and thus the source for the emulation was not their cultural traits but access to power and resources. For instance, Bakiyev made the alleged north-south division the main line of his presidential campaign. Originally from the south, Bakiyev faced a serious rival for the presidential post, Felix Kulov, a northerner who used to work as Akayev's prime-minister. "Southerners" saw Bakiyev as capable of restoring the balance of power between the north and the south, and he was able to persuade Kulov not to run for the presidency in return for the position of the prime-minister in case of Bakiyev's victory. Consequently Kulov said that he and Bakiyev aligned so as not to cause the country to split, which resonated with public expectations.[151]

It is interesting that both Bakiyev and Kulov publicly acknowledged the artificiality of the north-south division. Bakiyev, for example, at a press conference following his election as president, said that the division had been overstated for the purposes of political manipulation.[152] Kulov also made a similar statement by suggesting that "because the elites traditionally position themselves as representatives of either the south or the north… their influence on the common people creates the danger of a partition of the country."[153]

This is not to say that there are no differences between the northern part of Kyrgyzstan and the southern. On the contrary the country is divided along the urban/secular/Russianized

[150] Ryabkov, "The North-South Cleavage and Political Support in Kyrgyzstan," 306.
[151] Erika Marat, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 16.
[152] Ryabkov, "The North-South Cleavage and Political Support in Kyrgyzstan," 307.
[153] Ryabkov, "The North-South Cleavage and Political Support in Kyrgyzstan," 308.

(north) and rural/ religious/not Russianized (south) lines.[154] Thus, there are real cultural and social differences between the north and the south. However, a sense of regional identity occurs only when political elites appeal to it. The politicians, by-turn, resort to the north-south differences because, as Bond and Koch note, Kyrgyzstan lacks "strong political parties with clear ideologies and election platforms."[155] Thereby, belonging to a particular region is politicians' weapon in competitions for power.

Nevertheless, as I have argued, the local media accentuated the presumable regional cleavage but not the political manipulation present in the very idea of this cleavage. As a result, when disagreements between Bakiyev and Kulov led to the resignation of the latter, "regardless of how 'accurately' it reflected the situation, the Bakiyev-Kulov break-up was *read* and *narrated* as sign of danger of the worsening confrontation between the north and south."[156]

This seems strange, considering that the press in Kyrgyzstan is relatively free. The explanation can be that, as it has been demonstrated earlier in discussions of national programs, despite the ongoing process of democratization, the Kyrgyz media was still unprofessional. As Snyder noted, in democratizing states, press laws are violated more often than in democratic states. Thus, instead of finding out the truth and critically analyzing the facts, journalists are often attached to a "particular party or interest group" and do little or almost nothing to differentiate between fact and opinion, and "lack training in the standards of journalistic professionalism."[157] All these seem to be true in the Kyrgyz case.

Shift in national policies

[154] Lowe, "Nation-building and Identity in the Kyrgyz Republic," 111.
[155] Bond and Koch, "Interethnic Tensions in Kyrgyzstan: a Political Geographic Perspective," 541.
[156] Bond and Koch, "Interethnic Tensions in Kyrgyzstan: a Political Geographic Perspective," 540, authors' emphasis
[157] Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratisation and Nationalist Conflict* (London and New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2000), 65.

As discussed earlier, Akayev's national policies almost totally excluded Uzbeks from politics. Thus, Uzbeks welcomed the change of power in Kyrgyzstan, which can be best explained by the idea of *political alienation* developed by Ctirin *et al.*

> To be politically alienated is to feel a relatively enduring sense of estrangement from existing political institutions, values and leaders. At the far end of the continuum, the politically alienated feel themselves outsiders, gripped in an alien political order; they would welcome fundamental changes in the ongoing regime.[158]

Moreover, the participation of some Uzbek leaders in the "Tulip Revolution" yielded positive results,– for example, Anvar Artykov, an Uzbek, was appointed as the governor of the Osh region, which suggested the improvement of the Uzbek minority's situation in Kyrgyzstan. However, the Uzbek's positive expectations did not come true. In 2006, Artykov was forced to leave his position.[159]

Furthermore, in October 2007 Bakiyev initiated a referendum to make constitutional changes which completely changed the electoral system from a single-member district system to a party-list proportional system. Supposedly, this change should have given more opportunity to the main four Uzbek politicians, – Davron Sobirov, Alisher Sobirov, Kadyrjon Batyrov, and Muhamedjan Mamasaidov, – in the forthcoming elections in December of the same year. Before the election, two Uzbek leaders, Alisher Sobirov and Mamasaidov, enrolled themselves in the pro-presidential party, *Ak Jol*, and received seats in parliament after the party's questionable victory. At the same time, the other two politicians, Davron Sobirov and Batyrov, established their own party called *Rodina* and were not even allowed to participate in the elections due to the

[158] Jack Citrin *et al*. "Personal and Political Sources of Political Alienation." *British Journal of Political Science*, 5 (1975) 3.
[159] Fumagalli, "Framing Ethnic Minority Mobilisation in Central Asia," 586.

dubious claim that some of party's members did not have Kyrgyz citizenship. Hence, Davron Sobirov and Batyrov did not get into the parliament.[160]

Uzbek resentment increased in 2007, when the Kyrgyz judiciary system did not protect farmland and property that belonged to Uzbek political leader, Batyrov, "from occupation by 200 Kyrgyz families."[161] In addition, this case reminded Uzbeks of the 1990 Osh conflict when Kyrgyz elites granted part of an Uzbek collective farm to Kyrgyz settlers.[162] The same year, Uzbek leaders sent an appeal to the Kyrgyz government asking to pay attention to the anti-Uzbek activities which followed the "Tulip Revolution" in 2005.[163]

However, since Bakiyev won the presidency with high public support, he did not try to re-organize the old national programs or to initiate new ones. The president appointed a committee to create a new national program, but the committee's work proved to be ineffective. In the spring of 2007 the committee announced that it had decided to issue a document stating that the Kyrgyz government should not promote any national ideas. Instead constitutional principles such as nationwide unity, rule of law, freedom of speech, (i.e. civic nationalism) should be promoted. However, the resulting document was not publicized in mass media and was unlikely to have any effect.[164]

Conclusion

With the collapse of Soviet rule and Kyrgyzstan's acquisition of independence, the newly established Kyrgyz state continued the nationalist course established by the Soviets. Namely,

[160] Brent Hierman, "What Use Was The Election To Us? Clientalism and Political Trust amongst ethnic Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan." *Nationalities Papers*, 38 (2010), 249.
[161] Bond and Koch, "Interethnic Tensions in Kyrgyzstan: a Political Geographic Perspective," 541.
[162] Bond and Koch, "Interethnic Tensions in Kyrgyzstan: a Political Geographic Perspective," 541.
[163] Fumagalli, "Framing Ethnic Minority Mobilisation in Central Asia," 586.
[164] Marat, "Imagined Past, Uncertain Future,"17-18.

Kyrgyzstan adopted the *Manas* ideology, based on the Kyrgyz national epic of the same name, which resembled Soviet *korenizatsiia* in that it favored Kyrgyz over the minorities and negatively affected the relations between the Kyrgyz and the Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan. There was also developed a he civic national program called *Kyrgyzstan Our common Home*, however in the most difficult situations related to territorial questions,– the border dispute with Uzbekistan and the invasion of the radical Islamic organization,– it was abandoned in favor of *Manas*. Moreover, the named events fundamentally changed the views of Kyrgyz and Uzbeks of each other. While Kyrgyz became more negative and less trustful towards Uzbeks because of the perception of Uzbeks as people linked to Uzbekistan and not Kyrgyzstan, Uzbeks, on the other hand, became more willing to integrate into the Kyrgyzstani society. The border dispute made Uzbeks to change their memory of Uzbekistan as their place of attachment and instead develop an attachment to Kyrgyzstan. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that territory-related questions were crucial in shaping the views of Kyrgyz and Uzbeks about each other.

Chapter III. Kyrgyz-Uzbek interethnic conflict of the summer 2010: the narratives of war

During the first twenty years of Kyrgyzstan's independence, Uzbeks were not only politically alienated, but also, after the border dispute with Uzbekistan and the invasion of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in Kyrgyzstan, seen as invaders by the Kyrgyz. At the same time, Uzbeks developed attachment to Kyrgyzstan due to Uzbekistan's tight border regime, which was not the case during the Soviet time, when ethnic minorities were encouraged to associate themselves with the state of their ethnic kin. These divergent views of each other and each other's (non)belonging to the territory of Kyrgyzstan greatly contributed to what both groups today call a war.

The "war" occurred in Osh and Jalalabad cities and *raions* and while in the immediate aftermath many international organizations produced various types of analysis of why and how the conflict took place, the case of the conflict pervention in Uzgen city and *raion* located between Osh and Jalalabad remained unresearched. Thus, my research of 2014 upon which this chapter relies, attempts at studying longer-lasting narratives of how the "war" was conceptualized and characterized by people from both conflict-affected areas and people from Uzgen with a focus on conflict prevention in Uzgen. The narratives presented in the chapter are interviews I conducted with both ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks representatives of local government and customary institutions, civil society organizations, law-enforcement officers, female and male leaders of communities, youth groups, and religious communities. They are complemented with the interviews with ordinary people.

The chapter aims (1) to explain the political situation preceding the conflict. It will then (2) provide a "cause and effect" analysis of violent events in Osh and Jalalabad and try to correlate them with theories of collective memory and territory in order to understand what episodes

ordinary people see as signs of war, based on the fieldwork interviews. Finally, the chapter will argue (3) that the question of territory was one of the most important reasons for the conflict and hence the war terminology.

The political situation in Kyrgyzstan preceding the conflict

As with Akayev, Bakiyev's enrichment of his family,– who controlled all main legal and illegal business activity, including organised crime and drug trafficking in the south of the country,– and the perceived appointment of people from his southern clan led to Bakiyev's removal from office in April 2010.[165] Uzbeks, displeased with their political alienation under Bakiyev's rule, tended to support Kyrgyzstan's new interim government in spring 2010.

At the same time, the Kyrgyz in the south continued to support the ousted Bakiyev. After Bakiyev's supporters tried to take power in May by seizing the governor's office in Jalalabad, – Bakiyev's place of origin, – the interim government turned to the leaders of Uzbek community for help. In particular, the interim government asked the Uzbek leaders to assist in carrying out a raid on the governor's office in order to drive Bakiyev's supporters out and finish the former president's rule. An Uzbek leader and wealthy businessman, Kadyrjon Batyrov, became the main organizer of the raid.[166]

Considering the new alliance with the interim Kyrgyz government as an opportunity to speak for his ethnic community, Batyrov appealed to the Uzbeks to solicit greater participation in political institutions, as the interim government had encouraged him to do. In meetings with ordinary people, Batyrov and other Uzbek leaders suggested that the Uzbek language be given the status of official language in the regions of compact Uzbek settlement, and that the conditions

[165] Bond and Koch, "Interethnic Tensions in Kyrgyzstan: a Political Geographic Perspective," 540-541.
[166] Interview with the head of Uzgen police department, Uzgen, May 2014.

for Uzbek participation in state politics be improved. However, the regular occurrence of the Uzbeks' meetings and the advancement of their requests alarmed many Kyrgyz, who interpreted the meetings and requests as a desire of the Uzbek minority to take advantage of the chaos and seize power. This fear would create a precedent for the subsequent Kyrgyz-Uzbek conflict, which occurred in early June 2010. The head of the police department in Uzgen, a Kyrgyz, framed it in the following way:

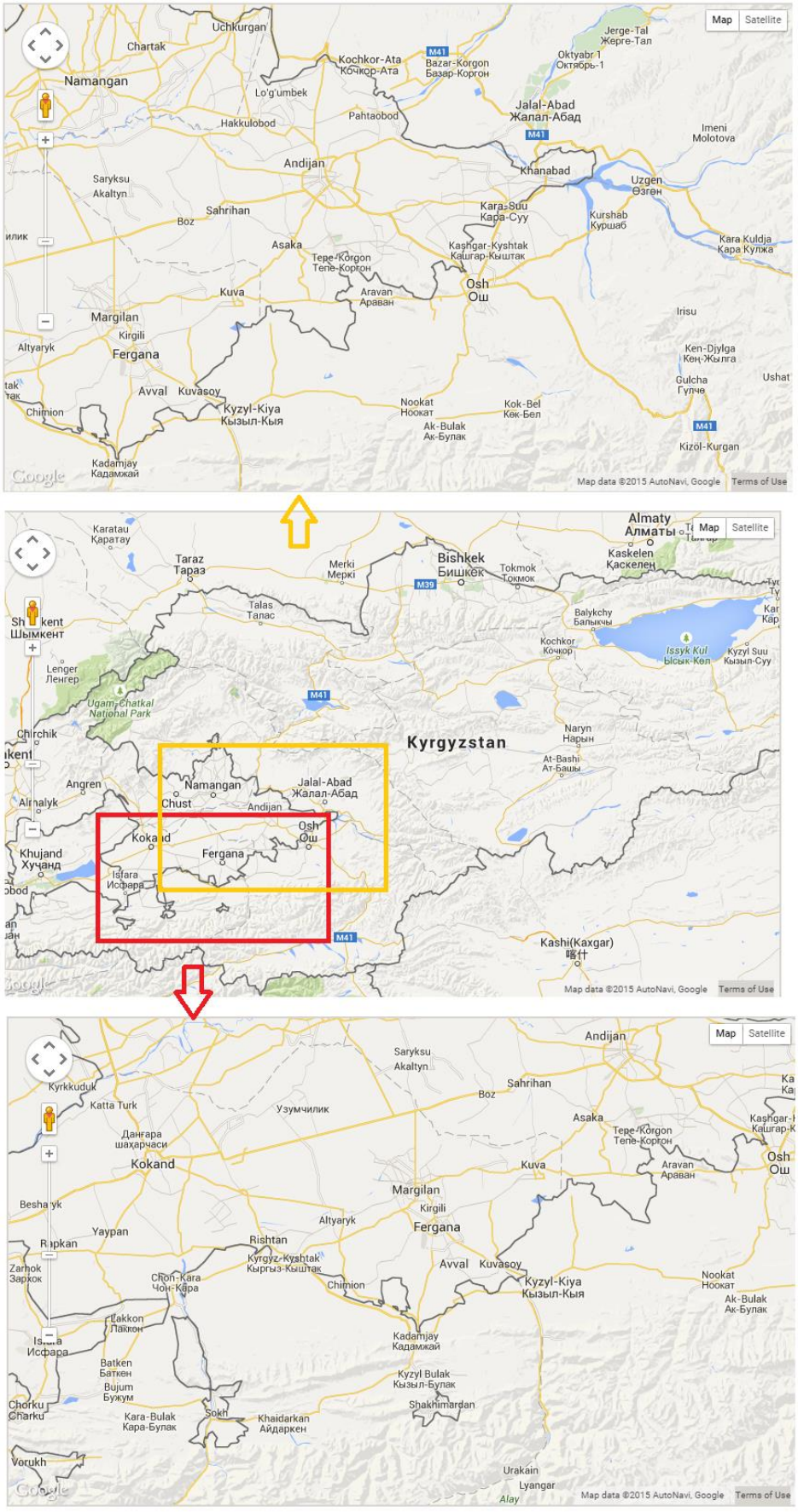
> The conflict happened for political reasons. Abdrasulov, Salakhidinov, Batyrov [Uzbek businessmen and leaders] made concrete promises to Uzbek people, so those united and were preparing for something. These separatists took advantage of the weak interim government. They left unpunished and there are still such people like Batyrov who do not stop provoking people.

In spite of popular rumors among the Kyrgyz, Uzbeks expressed no demand for secession during the meetings.[167] Nevertheless, the head of the Uzgen police department supports this version. However, it is interesting that he clearly distinguishes between different groups of Uzbeks, in this case between Uzbek leaders and ordinary Uzbeks, which was not the case with other Kyrgyz interviewees who mostly viewed Uzbeks as a homogeneous group. The idea of separatism is directly linked to the question of the ownership of territory and reflects the fear of the Kyrgyz that the Uzbeks would attempt to take control of their territory. This greatly contradicts the Uzbek narrative about the reason for the conflict. Dilfuza Karimova, a female director of the House of Friendship in Uzgen, – the institution regularly organizing awareness-raising festivals about nations living in Uzgen, – said:

> Initially, there were no fights between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks. I believe there were some other participants who intervened and organized it. I have Kyrgyz friends and I speak Kyrgyz better than some Kyrgyz. We should not believe strangers and attack our neighbors.

[167] Group discussion with Uzbek men, Uzgen, May 2014.

Several other Uzbek interviewees expressed a similar view, that a third party was to blame for the escalation into conflict. Such a view avoids placing blame on either of the conflict's participants, but also implies that an external intervening power had enough influence to cause Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, "the neighbors," to clash.



Conflict in Osh

The violence in the city of Osh, which lasted from 11 to 14 June, began after rumors which were spread via phone calls and text messages that a group of Uzbek men had raped Kyrgyz girls at a student dormitory.[168] Violence broke out at several locations, namely in places where Kyrgyz- and Uzbek-dominated districts met. Kyrgyz neighborhoods are mostly apartment blocks and Uzbek neighborhoods are *mahallas*. A *mahalla* in Uzbek is a traditional Uzbek neighborhood, in which several households, usually relatives, live each in its own house but share a common yard walled-in from the outside. Such difference in settlement of Kyrgyz and Uzbeks is linked to cultural-historical conditions. As Matveeva, Savin and Faizullaev, – members of the Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission (KIC) that conducted a research into the 2010 events at the Kyrgyz government's request, – explain in their field study,

> The Uzbek worldview reflects the spirit of old urban environment, where it is important who your neighbor is. Communities are bound by a territorial principle, but at the same time relationships are commercialized. Material assets are cherished and are a sign of achievement. The community's self-image is as builders, creators and wealth generators.[169]

Kyrgyz, on the other hand,

> [Were] newcomers into the urban environment, where they struggled to find a place. Many Kyrgyz had worked in industries in towns, such as Kyzyl-Kiya, Khaidarken, and Kadamjay, which collapsed with the USSR demise. They came to the cities, from where Europeans were withdrawing, into casual employment with uncertain housing prospects.[170]

Almaz, a 45-year old Kyrgyz employee at an international organization in Osh, made the following comment when giving me a ride in the city:

[168] Kirchik, "Dispatch from the Knife's Edge: The Coming Kyrgyzstan Catastrophe," 16-19; Matveeva *et al*., "Kyrgyzstan: Tragedy in the South," 27.
[169] Matveeva *et al*., "Kyrgyzstan: Tragedy in the South," 10-11.
[170] Matveeva *et al*., "Kyrgyzstan: Tragedy in the South," 10-11.

> The city center is called old city, it is mostly inhabited by Uzbeks. Uzbeks live only in *mahallas*. In Soviet time, there was an internal regulation, if somebody was selling a house in a *mahalla*, he would do his best to sell it to an Uzbek, and if the buyer was not an Uzbek, he had to pay a double price. The *mahalla* is comprised of several houses, which are owned, for example, by brothers, so several families share a common yard which is separated from the street by the concrete walls.[171]

Almaz's comment corroborates the statements of Matveeva *et al.* that the Uzbek population owned houses in what later became the city of Osh, before the arrival of Kyrgyz during the Soviet times, and care who their neighbors are. It also confirms the theories discussed earlier in the thesis that people make attachments to places that are of high importance to their psychological and physical well-being, as place attachement provides a sense of security.[172] By trying to sell their houses to the members of the same community, Uzbeks were therefore trying to preserve their sense of security. Furthermore, as individuals take part in public life as members of a particular group based on where they live, territorial attachement develops over time into a sense of identity. Territory thus links a group inhabiting it to their past and is vital for the continuation of their existence as a group.[173] Therefore, by ensuring that their neighbors are from their ethnic group, Uzbeks also try to sustain their group identity. At the same time, Kyrgyz who were settled mainly in the apartment blocks, were unsatisfied with such situation, as they felt discriminated on their "own" territory.[174] As Ainagul, a 50-year old female Kyrgyz veterinarian put it,

> If the government gave us the land, we would also buid houses, like Uzbeks.

[171] Interestingly, my Kyrgyz friend who lived in Osh from her birth until she moved to Bishkek at the age of 20 and who was helping me to transcribe the interviews, commented on this interview that previously she never knew what *mahalla* represented from the inside and that it is inhabited by an extended family. This could imply that some Kyrgyz might never had any Uzbek friends or acquaintances while living side by side to them.
[172] Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History.*
[173] Slawomir Kapralski, "Battlefields of Memory: Landscape and Identity in Polish-Jewish Relations." *History and Memory* 13 (2001) 35-58.
[174] Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History.*

The urban-rural settlement divide between Kygryz and Uzbeks was mentioned by a Kyrgyz *akim* (head of an *akimat*, state regional administration) of Uzgen when he was answering why Kyrgyz live in the outskirts while Uzbeks live in the center of Uzgen city:

> Kyrgyz dealt with cattle, this is why they are at the outskirts of the city. Uzbeks were involved in trade in the center. It is a historical fact. Kyrgyz needed *jailoo* (pasture), there are no conditions for growing and looking after cattle in the city. Uzbek mentality is like this, they are more into business, for example, restaurants, and these can be only opened in the city. One cannot open a *chaikhana* in *jailoo*, right? And Kyrgyz cannot travel every day to *jailoo* from the city center.

Interestingly, *akim* referred to distant history and not the relatively recent Soviet history which, one can suppose, influenced Uzgen in a similar way it influenced on Osh. His answer also implied that Uzbeks inhabited the present territory of Uzgen as long as the Kyrgyz, which differed from the views of the majority of Kyrgyz respondents. The *akim* emphasized that the factual nature of his statement, which resembles Assmann's theory that cultural memory related to distant past that has fixed reference points and does not change with the time.

In addition to the intersections of Kyrgyz and Uzbek neighborhoods, the clashes also took place at the intersections of Uzbek neighborhoods where the main roads led out of the city. Through the latter, rural Kyrgyz from several Osh districts, including Uzgen, moved into Osh *en masse*, many with the intention of rescuing their relatives. To stop rural Kyrgyz from entering Osh, Uzbeks began to block the roads. As a result, the Kyrgyz within Osh grew increasingly alarmed as they saw such actions as an attempt to trap them within the city. Authorities attempted to activate its forces, such as SOBR, PPS and police, but ineffectively. [175] Most police, still loyal to Bakiyev, dispersed and only a few remained to deal with the conflict. The Provisional

[175] In *Russian Patrulno-Postovaya Sluzhba* (Sentry Patrol Duty); in *Russian Spetsialnyi Otryad Bystrogo Reagirovaniya* (Rapid Reaction Force Squad).

Government representatives tried to negotiate but the crowd of rural Kyrgyz, reacting aggressively to Uzbek actions, requested weapons to fight the Uzbeks in Osh, who were allegedly armed, as mentioned by many Kyrgyz interviewees. Bakai, a 40-year old Kyrgyz taxi driver from Kurshab village, said:

> I was in Osh during the war, in the area of the main police station. I saw armed people, about a thousand of people, and about 600-700 were armed for sure. There were even teenagers. They were mainly carrying Kalashnikov rifles.

For Bakai, it was not unclear that the people with the weapons he described were Uzbeks, because, as he explained:

> Uzbeks are more united than Kyrgyz. They gather together in crowds quickly.

A war, as described in both classical and modern war studies, is killing many individuals among a collective enemy as the ultimate means of forcing that enemy to submit. Moreover, in the modern states that have delegitimized individual killing, killing can only be made legitimate in mass forms through abstract sets of relationships.[176] Therefore, the use of weapons intended for mass killing is seen as an element of war, as shown in Bakai's intereview. Ainagul, a 50-year old female Kyrgyz veterinarian expressed a similar view:

> One Uzbek bought weapons worth 80,000 soms [1400 US dollars] and we cannot even afford matches. They are always prepared to fight, if they happen to start it today, they will be able to do so. Unfortunate Kyrgyz can only think of having something to eat.

Ainagul brought a narrative popular among the Kyrgyz interviewees into conversation, that of the perceived economic advantage of Uzbeks over Kyrgyz, to prove that Uzbeks owned weapons, while Kyrgyz could not. Furthermore, she mentioned another narrative popular among the Kyrgyz population, that Uzbeks not only happened to have weapons because they were well

[176] Clausewitz, *On War*; Martin Shaw, *War and Genocide: Organized Killing in Modern Society* (Polity, 2003).

better-off than Kyrgyz and could allow buying them, but more importantly, because they had been preparing to fight in advance.

According to Levy and Thompson, the main attribute of war is sustained collective violence, distinguishing it from conflict, which is smaller in scope and impact.[177] In war studies, it is generally accepted that war involves the direct participation of a state and is closely related to politics.[178] Furthermore, there exists a conventional distinction between interstate (international) and intrastate (civil) wars for the control of secession from the state. While the former involves two or more states fighting each other, the latter implies a state fighting with a challenger within its own territory. Other types of war, such as ethnic or religious, usually fall under either of those two main types. The described theories help to understand why the interviewees viewed the conflict as a war, although neither Kyrgyz nor Uzbek states were involved officially and Uzbeks did not demand autonomy or any other kind of territorial revision.

The violence in Osh, in which dozens of people were injured or murdered, continued for three days. It intensified on the second day when the authorities confirmed the rumors that had appeared among the ordinary Kyrgyz about Uzbekistan preparing to support the Uzbek side militarily. This view was still popular among the Kyrgyz even four years after the conflict, as the interview with Kanybek, a 55-year old Kyrgyz male member of special services, major from Osh, shows:

> Imanjan Abdrasulov, Kadyrjon [Batyrov] and other Uzbek leaders gathered Uzbeks in the outskirts of the city, also sister of the cosmonaut [Salizhan] Sharipov, Mavlyuda, attended. In preparations of seizure of the Fergana valley, they instructed the people to write SOS on the roofs of their houses so that Uzbekistan's pilots knew which places they should bomb and which not. They distributed a special paint for this purpose. They had

[177] Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*; Vasquez, *The War Puzzle Revisited*.
[178] Levy and Thompson. *Causes of War*; Vasquez, *The War Puzzle Revisited*; Bull, *The Anarchical Society*; Clausewitz, *On War*.

> an agreement with Uzbeks from Uzbekistan who were supposed to come on helicopters and help Kyrgyzstani Uzbeks.

Kanybek's narrative reflects on the 2010 conflict as a military conspiracy of Kyrgyzstani Uzbeks who, according to Kanybek, cooperated with their ethnic kin just across the border, which reflects the general fear of many Kyrgyz of Uzbekistan's claims on the contested territory between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Interestingly, Kanybek mentioned the names of Salizhan Sharipov and his sister among the Uzbek leaders who cooperated with the Kyrgyz interim government, whereas they were not mentioned by anyone else or anywhere in the Kyrgyz press. Salizhan Sharipov is an Uzgen-born Kyrgyzstani cosmonaut of Uzbek ancestry, a source of pride for both Kyrgyz and Uzbeks. For example, in the main square of Uzgen, among the approximately a dozen of busts of Kyrgyzstani notable people, Sharipov's bust is the only one that makes a note of someone of Uzbek ethnicity.[179] Thus, mentioning the name of well-respected Uzbek by both Kyrgyz and Uzbeks among those to blame for the war might be an attempt to disprove that anybody from the "other" side is deserving trust. Meanwhile, the Uzbeks tell a different story. Nilyufer, a 45-year old Uzbek housewife, said:

> I received phone calls from my sister who lives in Osh. She told that during the conflict there people from Kurshab [a Kyrgyz-dominated village] came, stormed into houses and stole furniture. Later they had fights with each other, as they could not agree on how to divide the loot. These are monsters who do so. One should be happy with what he has, what he can earn by himself. In Muslim religion it is a sin to steal even a small thing. One should understand that when we leave this world, we will not be able to take things or anything with us, our treatment to other people will be the only thing that would matter in the next world. Nowadays people are shameless. Kyrgyz also wear religious dress and read *namaz* [prayer] but still are not afraid of God.

Nilyufer's comment emphasizes the loot as one of the experiences of the "war" and draws attention to the different extent to which Kyrgyz and Uzbeks tend to practice Islam. Furthermore,

[179] Personal observation, Uzgen May 2014.

the woman specifies the ethnicity of the perpetrators, which contrasts the opinion of the majority of Uzbek interviewees, who said that the perpetrators were "strangers" and "someone from outside." Kyrgyz and Uzbeks considered that each other's actions qualified as "war" actions, but local people of other ethnic backgrounds also did the same. Atai, a 45-old Turkish man from Ozgurush village in Uzgen *raion*, a seasonal construction worker in Russia, told:

> I myself was in Russia when the conflict happened. I heard from my relatives that people in Osh made embrasures from concrete during the fight. Also, some Uzbeks from Uzgen came running to Ozgurush and locals hid them. My relatives told that our village observed neutrality and nobody came to fight here. We are a multinational village, for example, this *mahalla* is Turkish and the one on the neighboring street is Kyrgyz.

From Atai's comment, it can be inferred that for him and his relatives what happened in Osh and Jalalabad was a "war" even if they did not experience it personally, because the people affected by it had to make embrasures, – a type of military fortification, – and because their village "observed neutrality," another word from military terminology. "Neutrality" is also used in international relations to refer to foreign policy, and in the given context of towns and villages neighboring each other makes it useful to distinguish between a place of attachment, which can be a small village, as shown in the interview, and territory, – a greater and epic concept, as implied, for example, in history textbooks.

Similarly to Atai, Islam, an Uzbek NGO leader from Uzgen, noted before he agreed to give me an interview, "I am of Uzbek ethnicity but I am neutral." It is important to note that mutual assistance and sheltering were also present among the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, as shown in the studies by Matveeva *et al.* and Akhmetshina. In some cases, common religious background

had a positive effect, with several Kyrgyz religious leaders protecting Uzbek people in mosques.[180]

As the field study by Matveeva *et al.* shows, in the rural areas of Osh *raion* the authorities tried to prevent conflict with relative success. In Kyrgyz-dominated Batken, after failing to persuade his people not to go to Osh city, the *akim* left the public meeting. The Batken Kyrgyz subsequently left for Osh, wherein they burnt Uzbek houses, before returning. In Alay, also Kyrgyz-dominated, the *akim* found out that the men from his village left to Osh only when he came to work in the morning after the people had already left.[181] Uzbek-dominated Aravan managed to prevent a possible conflict: while the authorities and the police failed to quiet the people, informal leaders, such as mediators from civil society organizations and *aksakals* ("white beard" in Kyrgyz and used to refer to elders, traditionally the most trusted members of the community) proved to be more persuasive.[182]

Matveeva *et al.* found that *aksakals* in Aravan managed to talk Uzbeks out of blowing up the bridges on the way to their houses after a large Kyrgyz crowd, who were angry that Uzbeks had attacked administrative buildings earlier, approached them. Later, the ousted Bakiyev's officials initiated reconciliation, although Uzbeks were nonetheless blamed for a burning police station and were demanded to repair it in exchange for lighter sentences for their kin. As interviews conducted by Matveeva *et al.* demonstrate, after the conflict Uzbeks were sentenced to 9-11 years, which consequently exacerbated Uzbeks' grievance.

[180] Matveeva *et al*., "Kyrgyzstan: Tragedy in the South," Madina Akhmetshina, "Loving Your Neighbor as Your Self-identity: Women's Leading Role in the Interethnic Sheltering During the Osh Conflict of 2010" (MA thesis, Central European University, 2012).
[181] Matveeva *et al*., "Kyrgyzstan: Tragedy in the South."
[182] Initially operating as a traditional and customary institution, the court of *aksakals* was institutionalized in 1995. *Aksakals* deal with daily problems of people like livestock stealing or spousal abuse.

In multi-ethnic Kara-Suu, local authorities tried to prevent violence by asking Uzbeks to stay in their houses and not go outside. However, they were unable to restrain the influx of Kyrgyz from other villages, and Kara-Suu saw severe casualties. In Nookat, also multi-ethnic, both Kyrgyz and Uzbeks were left highly distressed as Kyrgyz from the neighboring villages passed through it on their way to Osh. After the Alay men crossed their village, both communities began putting up barricades and preparing to defend themselves in case the former decided to loot Nookat on their way back. Authorities asked local dignitaries, – *aksakals*, mediators, – and Afghan war veterans who were wearing their uniforms to make them noticeable, to preserve peace. The shared fear of the attack by outsiders served as a uniting force for the people. The active participation of mediators and veterans of the Afghan war (1979-1989) or, as they are shortly referred to by locals, *Afghantsy* (Afghans) as people with military experience, probably contributed to why many interviewees called the events in the south of Kyrgyzstan a war.[183]

Conflict in Jalalabad

A conflict in Jalalabad started on 12 June, the day after the Osh conflict. In the absence of authorities and police at the point of gathering of a large crowd of Kyrgyz, an opposition leader, Kamchybek Tashiev, took the initiative to pacify the people, but unsuccessfully. The crowd was feeling aggressive after having heard of the losses from the Kyrgyz side in Osh. Furthermore, after the raid that Kadyrjon Batyrov conducted in Jalalabad in May, the thought that Uzbeks wanted to seize power seemed confirmed to Jalalabad dwellers.[184]

Just like in Osh, rural Kyrgyz from the *oblast* left their villages to participate in the violence. Rumors also played a great role in mobilizing people. In Taran-Bazar village, men

[183] Kyrgyzstani soldiery participated in the Afghan war when the country was part of the Soviet Union
[184] Matveeva *et al*., "Kyrgyzstan: Tragedy in the South," 10-11.

received phone messages telling them that Uzbeks had captured the town of Jalalabad. The lack of both media coverage and trust of security structures contributed to many people taking these messages as truth. In Jalalabad, people were more driven by the desire to protect their land from what they perceived as an Uzbek takeover than in Osh. Those who did not want to fight were labelled as unpatriotic and ultimately forced to participate. As a result, Uzbeks and Kyrgyz clashed for several days. Informal leaders and authorities tried to pacify the people, and while some listened and quit, others stayed and continued to loot and destroy the other side's property and businesses.[185]

In the town, there was one case when Uzbek elders managed to save their quarter at the Ivashin Street in the Sputnik district from attack by telling the Kyrgyz that they did not support Batyrov and were loyal citizens of Kyrgyzstan. In some villages, like Oktyabrskoe, Kyrgyz protected their Uzbek fellow-villagers from militant Kyrgyz, but often charged money for it. The clashes in the Uzbek-dominated Sanpa, which is on the road to Osh, escalated the tensions. After The Kyrgyz killed several Uzbeks, the Sanpa Uzbeks spilt oil on the road to stop Kyrgyz cars and attacked those in the cars. Dinara, a 35-year old Kyrgyz businesswoman in Osh, referred to this case during her interview:

> Uzbeks made it on purpose. They spilt oil on the road and hid. And when the Kyrgyz got trapped, they killed them.

Dinara described the case in Sanpa as a military tactic by pointing at that killing people and hiding were elements of the strategy. According to Matveeva and Savin, the situation described above was resolved after both parties apologized and promised not to attack each other.[186]

[185] Matveeva *et al*., "Kyrgyzstan: Tragedy in the South."
[186] Matveeva *et al*., "Kyrgyzstan: Tragedy in the South."

Non-conflict in Uzgen

In light of the violence in Osh and Jalalabad and how easily the conflicts there escalated, non-violence in the town of Uzgen as well as the whole Uzgen *raion* is an exemplary case. It is important to say that there were several factors that could have contributed to violence in Uzgen. First, the geographic location: Uzgen is situated between the two cities affected by the conflict, the road connecting the two passes through Uzgen. Second, the town of Uzgen is densely populated with Uzbeks (90-95%), whereas the villages of Uzgen *raion* surrounding the town are Kyrgyz-dominated. Taking into consideration the active rural mobilization in Osh and Jalalabad, one could suppose that a similar mobilization should have happened in Uzgen. Had such a thing indeed occurred, it would not have been an exaggeration to expect a conflict as violent as in the cities of Osh and Jalalabad, even though the population in Uzgen is smaller.

As the third factor shows, during the 1990 Kyrgyz-Uzbek conflict, Uzgen was the epicenter of violence and suffered most casualties. The conflict aftermath was as drastic as the conflict itself. As the head of police department in Uzgen and a taxi driver from Kurshab told in their interviews, many Kyrgyz left the town and moved to villages in the Uzgen area. For about half a year, they completely avoided travelling by the central Osh-Jalalabad-Bishkek road through Uzgen, instead using the bypass road or even taking the plane that travelled between the villages of Myrzaki and Ilyichovka. Meanwhile, Uzbeks from the villages in Uzgen area, such as Kurshab, began to move into the town and settle there. Kyrgyz who left Uzgen in the 1990 and also those who never lived in the town before only started coming to the town in the early 2000s.[187] Considering these named facts, Uzgen is an interesting case to study how the conflict

[187] Interview with the Kyrgyz taxi driver from Kurshab, Osh, May 2014; interview with the head of police department in Uzgen, Uzgen, May 2014.

was prevented there in 2010. The analysis presented below is based on my field research activities in Uzgen city and *raion*, which included 3 group discussions and 20 individual interviews with both Kygryz and Uzbeks.

As soon as the *aksakals* learnt about the conflict in Osh, on the night of 10 to 11 June, they immediately gathered people near the "Aichurok" cinema to hold a meeting. They then went to the city administration representatives and the *akim* and asked for help with organizing a meeting with other informal leaders of the community. The local government contacted quarter leaders, *Afghantsy*, representatives of youth groups and civil society organizations. They also reached out to the representatives of village administrations in the whole *raion* and asked them to come to Uzgen. At the meeting, each formal and informal institution discussed their tasks and went to talk to ordinary people in their respective areas of residence.[188]

The police established posts on the central Osh-Jalalabad-Bishkek road which runs through Uzgen in places near the villages Yassy, Myrzaki and Sheraly. This was done to prevent Kyrgyz from villages who had lost relatives or friends in Osh from entering the town and attacking Uzgen Uzbeks in revenge.[189] Two hours later *aksakals* ordered the unblocking of the road because it could potentially create a traffic jam. Furthermore, there were people in the town who wanted to evacuate their relatives, especially children, from Osh. They were allowed to leave and bring their relatives with them.[190] In the town, Uzbeks made barricades near their *mahallas.* In their talks, leaders persuaded people to stay rational. As Abdugafar Khadji, an Uzbek *aksakal*, explained,

[188] Interview with *aksakal*, Uzgen, May 2014.
[189] Interview with the head of police station, Uzgen, May 2014.
[190] Interview with the akim of Uzgen, Uzgen, May 2014.

> We here cannot allow ourselves conflict with each other because Uzbeks are traditionally involved in agriculture and Kyrgyz in cattle-breeding businesses, and sell our products to each other at bazaars. If we begin fighting, nobody will do the work and we will both suffer.

Leaders also appealed to the memory of the 1990 conflict, which, according to Abdugafar Khadji, "was a lesson that taught us that conflict brings nothing good to anyone."[191] This seems to be a common narrative among the people. As Firuza, an Uzbek woman, a witness of the 1990 conflict, said, "When your house and everything around is burnt down, you have no desire to do anything, life becomes meaningless."[192] The other Uzbek woman, Nargiz, added that in the 1990 she had to run from a place to place to hide with a baby in her arms. "This is the worst memory I have and I want that my children never see anything like this," she said.[193] As it can be seen, interviewees who witnessed the 1990 conflict each had their own negative memory of it. However, when the informal leaders appealed to it, it discouraged the whole group. This confirms Halbwachs' view that individual memories are embedded in the group context.[194] It can be also seen in the interview with Aibek, a 19-year old Kyrgyz student in Russia and a native of Uzgen, who said:

> I did not witness the 1990 conflict, I only heard from my [Kyrgyz] friend that Uzbeks killed his father and burned their house. I do not know the whole situation very well, I am sure if you ask an Uzbek guy he will answer differently.

Although Aibek did not have any experience of the 1990 conflict, he had a "memory" of it that was transferred to him by a member of the group he belonged to. Though probably because he was a student abroad and visiting Uzgen only during holidays, Aibek's narrative is somewhat

[191] Interview with *aksakal*, Uzgen, May 2014.
[192] Group discussion with Uzbek women, Uzgen, May 2014.
[193] Group discussion with Uzbek women, Uzgen, May 2014.
[194] Halbwachs, M., [1952] 1992. On Collective Memory.

detached from the narratives of the rest of the Kyrgyz respondents. His answer implied that one's perspective depends on what group he or she belongs to.

During the violence in Osh and Jalalabd, the youth of Uzgen, as a group, which can be potentially easily mobilized, received special attention. "There were young men who wanted to go and fight, but *aksakals* deterred the youth by their words," Sardor, a young Uzbek man recalled.[195] The next day, 11 June, the situation in Uzgen became tense. The central bazaar, – which is the heart of the town and which operates on a daily basis, – closed. As a result, prices on food rose and people began stockpiling food. The mayor of Uzgen, then director of the "Dan Azyk" joint-stock company, organized the sale of bags of flour in a *mahalla* in the center of town at its regular price to address the growing panic. Some street vendors were also working. As Nodira, a 20-year old Uzbek woman recalled,

> My Uzbek neighbors told me it was dangerous and that I should not be selling in the street at the time when anyone can attack me. Kyrgyz, on the other hand, praised me for doing my job and being open. I was not afraid because I thought if I die, that would be a God's will.

These words show that some Uzbeks feared being attacked and saw hiding as a solution, whereas Kyrgyz also feared the same but wished for openness to ensure that the other side was not secretly preparing to assault them. Just as in Osh and Jalalabad, rumors in Uzgen were also present and circulated among the people freely via mobile phones. Thus, the informal leaders, – Afghan war veterans and mediators from civil society organizations, – patrolled the town and addressed the "slightest sign of panic" by providing people with accurate information and dispelling rumors.[196]

[195] Interview with Uzbek young men, Uzgen, May 2014.
[196] Interview with the head of police department, Uzgen, May 2014.

Uzgen police also proved to be more effective than in Osh and Jalalabad. Furthermore, both informal leaders and police guarded the bazaar and the wheat processing factory.

Meanwhile, on the same day in the neighboring village of Kara-Kulja, the Osh governor's homeland, Kyrgyz requested transport to go to Osh. The road from Kara-Kulja to Osh passes through Uzgen, and both the governor and authorities of Uzgen were worried about the dangers of the road. Thus, the governor told the police to set checkpoints on the road and asked the authorities in Kara-Kulja to prevent mobilization. Though local informal leaders talked to the people, some men still got through the checkpoints to Osh. Uzgen *raion* authorities instructed their Uzbek population to sit at home and not go into the streets.[197]

The next day, on 12 June, having learnt of the Kyrgyz casualties and their trapping via phone calls and text messages, large crowds of Kara-Kulja men advanced to Osh through Uzgen. They went through Uzgen peacefully and were accompanied by a car convoy without numbered plates, led by a traffic police inspector. Apparently, their job was to watch that the men do not stop in Uzgen. On June 13 Kara-Kulja men returned to their village through Uzgen again, also peacefully. The efficiency with which Uzgen leaders reacted to the news and the efforts of the Kara-Kulja police contributed to the peaceful resolution of a potentially dangerous situation.[198]

On the same day, *aksakals* ordered to reopen the bazaar, which assured the people that everything was under control.[199] People listened to the *aksakals* especially carefully because *aksakals* are not only the most trusted members of the community, but had themselves experienced the 1990 conflict. As one woman put it, "*aksakals'* words are like a law for us."[200]

[197] Matveeva *et al*., "Kyrgyzstan: Tragedy in the South."
[198] Matveeva *et al*., "Kyrgyzstan: Tragedy in the South."
[199] Interview with *aksakal*, Uzgen, May 2014.
[200] Group discussion with Kyrgyz women, Uzgen, May 2014.

The informal leaders and the police conducted their explanatory work and peace-building activities for the next several days, while violence was taking place in Osh and Jalalabad. In the mosques, religious leaders also appealed to peace.[201] As an NGO leader explained, "This all was not an easy task, sometimes we [leaders and mediators from civil society organizations] met with the same people for 10-15 times to ensure they are alright."[202]

However, in Kanybek's narration, a 55-year old Kyrgyz male member of special services, a major from Osh, the *aksakals'* role in preserving peace in Uzgen was important for other reason. In the interview, he told:

> The *aksakals* of Uzgen gathered and said they wanted peace. So they went to Sovet village [main instigators of the 1990 conflict were from this village] and, as I heard, they slaughtered sheep [slaughtering, cooking and treating a sheep is a Muslim tradition of hospitality and peacefulness], Uzbeks themselves say so. *Aksakals* told that Kadyrjon came and made a speech to mobilize Uzbeks and that people will not follow him. *Aksakals* asked for a peaceful agreement that Kyrgyz from Sovet will not attack Uzgen. *Aksakals* also visited police, prosecutor general, and *akim*. So, they left the road unblocked and gave bread and presents to all cars passing through Uzgen. I talked to Uzbeks in Osh and Jalalabad and all of them say that Uzgen *aksakals* acted wisely. In Osh and Jalalabad aksakals missed the opportunity to save the situation, except for Bir Adyr and On Adyr districts, where Kyrgyz talked to Kyrgyz and Uzbeks talked to Uzbeks about not participating.

Thus, according to Kanybek, peace was preserved because *aksakals* managed to persuade people not to participate in what Kanybek earlier marked as separatist activities and thus demonstrate their loyalty to the Kyrgyz state. Moreover, Kanybek emphasized the cultural tradition of slaughtering sheep that, according to him, was a proof of *aksakals'* good will.

In addition to *aksakals* and *Afghantsy'* activism, leaders of civil society organizations, who had received international training in mediation for a number of years, initiated the collection

[201] Interview with *imam* (religious leader); the population of Uzgen is mostly religious and there are 40 mosques in the town with 50,000 inhabitants.
[202] Interview with NGO leader, Uzgen, May 2014.

of humanitarian aid for Osh, preliminarily having explained its importance to the people. The process of gathering humanitarian aid served as a uniting force for Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Uzgen, as it provided an opportunity for both sides to communicate with each other directly and thus avoid potentially inflammatory rumors. On 15 June, *Afghantsy* delivered the aid to Osh, escorted by *aksakals*, women and deputies. Besides bringing aid, their mission was to observe the situation in Osh, which by that time had calmed down, and report their observations to the people in Uzgen. Peace-building activities in Uzgen continued until the 17 June.

As it can be seen, in Uzgen, there were factors which could have sparked the violence similar to that of the conflict in Osh and Jalalabad. However, unlike in other places in the Osh region, conflict was ultimately prevented. But what seemed very unusual, – and also very subtle, – is how Kyrgyz, both from Uzgen and other places, spoke about Uzgen in territorial terms. Having taken a taxi from Osh to Uzgen on the first day of my research, I asked the taxi driver if he was from Uzgen in the hope to take my first interview while on the 40 minutes journey. Bakai, a 40-year old Kyrgyz taxi driver, answered jokingly but also anxiously:

> No, am I an Uzbek to be from there? I am from Kurshab.

Bakai's rhetorical question not only could imply that chances were small that he, a Kyrgyz, was from Uzgen whose majority of inhabitants are Uzbeks, and that the Kyrgyz-dominated Kurshab village was a more likely option. But it also could be interpreted as giving some "legitimacy" to the fact that Uzgen was an Uzbek territory. I heard a similar comment on the "Uzbekness" of Uzgen days later from another Ainagul, an Uzgen born 50-year old female Kyrgyz veterinarian, when she was answering how probable would be a large conflict in Uzgen after what happened in Osh and Jalalabad in 2010:

> The probability of a new conflict is very high. It is enough that one approaches another and tell him something offensive, – and everything will repeat again. They [Uzbeks] will fight with guns and we will run back to *our* valley.[203]

The fact that Ainagul said "our valley," not simply "valley," is similar to Kanybek's subtle reference to Uzgen as a "legitimately" Uzbek place. Perhaps it could be for the reason that Uzgen is one of the few places in Kyrgyzstan that has the pre-revolutionary religious architecture, such as mausoleum complex dated 11-12th centuries, which is largely Uzbek and is the source of pride for both Kyrgyz and Uzbeks.

The conflict aftermath and its influence on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek narratives

The conflicts in Osh and Jalalabad resulted in 470 casualties, where 74 per cent were Uzbeks and 25 per cent were Kyrgyz (1 per cent were other ethnicities).[204] About 400,000 people were forced to flee to other cities and regions in the country or into Uzbekistan (they were later forced by the Uzbek government to return to Kyrgyzstan), and some 2,000 houses were destroyed or burned.[205]

The question of who precisely organized the conflict has proved to be difficult to answer. Several international organizations, such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, and the Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission (KIC) – the latter having conducted their research at the Kyrgyz government's request – issued reports in which they blamed the Kyrgyz interim government in that security forces handed weapons to the Kyrgyz rioters and participated in the violence themselves. [206] As a response, the Kyrgyz parliament declared Kimmo Kiljunen, head

[203] Author's emphasis.
[204] Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry into the Events in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010.
[205] Bond and Koch, "Interethnic Tensions in Kyrgyzstan: a Political Geographic Perspective."
[206] Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry into the Events in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010, 47-54; Report of the Human Rights Watch:

of the KIC, *persona non grata*.[207] Moreover, the government responded with a report in which they blamed both Bakiyev's loyalists and the Uzbek political leaders.[208] The view of many Kyrgyz that I talked to resonated with the government's view and the opinion that the Kyrgyz "lost the information war" to Uzbeks, referring to the international reports, gave raise to nationalism.[209] The head of police department in Uzgen commented:

> Many representatives of international organizations came to conduct research here [to the south of Kyrgyzstan]. There were some people from an international organization based in England, they only interviewed Uzbeks. Why this organization did not ask Kyrgyz? It is unfair.

The interviewee's comment shows disappointment similar to the expressed by several Kyrgyz interviewees, who felt they were ignored by the international media. While the reports of the most international organizations include interviews with both Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, it is possible that some interviewed Uzbeks only, as the head of police said. This could be explained, however, rather by the aim to make Uzbek voices heard than ignoring the Kyrgyz, since the local media in Kyrgyzstan only represented the view of the Kyrgyz.

Since then, many politicians, especially those from the south, made this theme central to their agendas. As a result, the nationalist party Ata-Jurt collected the most votes in parliamentary elections held three months after the conflict, in October 2010.[210] Nationalists from this and other

http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/kyrgyzstan0810webwcover_1.pdf [Accessed on 6 June 2015]; Report of the Amnesty International: http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/4386~v~Partial_Truth_and_Selective_Justice__The_Aftermath_of_the_June_2010_Violence_in_Kyrgyzstan.pdf [Accessed on 6 June 2015]

[207] Eurasia Daily Monitor, 8 (103), "Kyrgyz Parliament Bans Kiljunen": http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Bswords%5D=8fd5893941d69d0be3f378576261ae3e&tx_ttnews%5Bany_of_the_words%5D=kiljunen&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=37982&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=62c243e919752aef4fa35be6a61d2e8e [Accessed on 27 April 2015]

[208] Fergana News Agency: http://www.ferganews.com/news.php?id=16189&mode=snews [Accessed on 8 June].

[209] Interview with the head of Uzgen police department, Uzgen, May 2014; interview with an employee at an international organization in Osh, Osh, May 2014.

[210] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-11664990 [Accessed on 8 June 2015].

parties insisted that Uzbeks and other minorities must learn Kyrgyz language and not use their native languages; some even promoted the idea of bringing back the Soviet notion of "titular nation" to the Kyrgyz.[211]

Furthermore, in July 2011, in the run-up to the presidential elections scheduled for October, the Kyrgyz interim government removed the statue of "Lady Liberty" (Erkindik) from Bishkek's main square and replaced it with a statue of Manas, despite the fact that there was already one statue of Manas in the city, approximately 400 meters (0.24 miles) away from the new statue's location.[212] A new statue of Manas also appeared in Osh, just at the entrance to the city. In Osh, many street names were changed from Russian, which is considered there as the language of international communication, to Kyrgyz. For example, Internatsionalnaya ("International") street became Abdykadyrova (named after Zhalil Abdykadyrov, an ethnic Kyrgyz theatrical director and writer) Street.[213] A similar "boom" in changing street names happened only after the collapse of the Soviet Union.[214] Names of cafes and shops that used to be written in Uzbek also changed.

The Kyrgyz-Uzbek University had its name changed to Osh Social University and the Imam al-Bukhari Mosque got "Alay" in the end of its name, turning into Imam al-Bukhari-Alay. People from Alay are believed to be the main participants in the violence in Osh and are referred to as patriots by the nationalists. Furthermore, on the second anniversary of the conflict in June 2012, a Peace Bell, the international symbol of peacemaking and also the first of its kind in Central Asia, was erected in Osh by the Kyrgyz state. The bell has the engraving "Peace in the

[211] CentrAsia news agency: http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1287433860 [Accessed on 8 June 2015].
[212] Kloop news agency: http://kloop.kg/blog/2011/07/27/pamyatnik-erkindik-demontiruyut-zavtra-vecherom/ [Accessed on 8 June 2015].
[213] Interview with an employee at an international organization in Osh, Osh, May 2014.
[214] Interview with an employee at an international organization in Osh, Osh, May 2014.

whole world" in three languages – Kyrgyz, Russian, and English – but not in Uzbek, thereby implying that only the Kyrgyz suffered in the conflict and deserve to be remembered.

These and similar actions of the Kyrgyz interim government served to greatly displease the Uzbek community. The desire to integrate into Kyrgyzstani society had changed to a compulsion to leave the country immediately. Already in July 2010, those Uzbeks who could afford it immigrated to Russia. Those Uzbeks who stayed received humanitarian aid from international organizations; particularly help in rebuilding their destroyed houses.

However, though a minority in the political arena, there is also a group of civic nationalists who promote inclusion and ethnic reconciliation. It includes the President Almazbek Atambayev and his administration, as well as a group of civil society activists and media representatives. Most importantly, they worked out and released in April 2013 the "Concept of Development of National Unity and Interethnic Relations in the Kyrgyz Republic."[215] Representatives of all parliamentary fractions and members of civil society took part in its drafting. Acknowledging the problems that exist in the realm of interethnic relations, the document aims to form a civic form of nationalism, which celebrates unity of all citizens in their cultural diversity.

According to this "Concept," it also will minimize the "social isolation and differences between representatives of different ethnicities in their participation in socio-political and economic life" and "create a single socio-cultural space."[216] However, notwithstanding the idea of ethnic consolidation, the document does not define precisely what is understood under the

[215]Concept of Development of National Unity and Interethnic Relations in the Kyrgyz Republic: http://www.president.kg/files/docs/kontseptsiya_ukrepleniya_edinstva_naroda_i_mejetnicheskih_otnosheniy_v_kr.pdf [Accessed on 8 June 2015].
[216] Concept of Development of National Unity and Interethnic Relations in the Kyrgyz Republic, author's translation from Russian, 19.

"civic identity" and the rights related to it. In particular, the "Concept" does not specify which minority groups need help in maintaining their right to mass media or education in their native languages, and thus the Uzbek population's situation is unclear. For example, some Uzbek high school graduates complained that with the removal of the Uzbek language from language options in National Testing, it was difficult for them to pass exams in the remaining language options (Russian and Kyrgyz).[217]

Furthermore, in the summer of 2013, the President signed the order stipulating measures for development of Kyrgyz language and improvement of language policy in Kyrgyzstan. In accordance therewith, the national program for Kyrgyz language development and language policy improvement for 2014-2020 was drafted. The order also mentions the publication of innovative Kyrgyz language textbooks in 2014 and introduction of Kyrgyz language knowledge test for public and municipal servants among other measures. In addition, Atambayev refused to sign a bill that stated that the state administration should use only Kyrgyz language, noting that before requesting people to use exclusively Kyrgyz, the government must first create the necessary conditions for learning Kyrgyz.

This news prompted many Uzbek parents in the south to send their children to Kyrgyz schools.[218] Women in Uzgen in particular were enthusiastic about the new law: "We very much hope that the language program is fully implemented and there are new textbooks in Kyrgyz. At our schools many textbooks are in Russian and from the Soviet times. And the Kyrgyz language

[217] National Testing – a set of written exams necessary to enrol in universities in Kyrgyzstan.
[218] Interview with *imam* (religious leader), Uzgen, May 2014; interview with the head of Uzgen police department, Osh, May 2014.

textbooks are very scarce."[219] This is a good sign that the remaining Uzbek population is eager to integrate in the Kyrgyz society. As an Uzbek NGO leader said:

> If there are Uzbeks who still think they do not need to know the Kyrgyz language, bad for them. It has been a while since we are bound to Kyrgyzstan and not to Uzbekistan. Today it is easier to travel around the world several times than to travel once to Uzbekistan with its borders closed all the time.

It also could be that the Uzbek women tried to address the 2011 news in the Kyrgyz media about Uzbek school children in Leilek, a *raion* in the south of Kyrgyzstan, who considered that the president of Kyrgyzstan was Islam Karimov, who is in fact the president of Uzbekistan. The news went viral in the Kyrgyz media and Uzbeks were often criticized in the way similar to how Ilyas, a 22-year old Kygryz and Jalalabad native, put it in his interview:

> Uzbek children think that the president of Kyrgyzstan is Islam Karimov. Why do Uzbeks teach this their children?

This is despite the school director's comment that for the lack of textbooks on history of Kyrgyzstan, a state-required course in all educational institutions, the school had to rely on used textbooks from the neighboring Uzbekistan, which have the portrait of Karimov on the first page with a caption "Our president Islam Karimov." Ilyas' irritation on the surface seems to stem from the ignorance of Uzbek school children, however, on a deeper level it also represents the fear that many Kyrgyz share, that Kyrgyzstani Uzbeks have territorial claims on Kyrgyz lands.

The civic nationalists also considered the problems with police during and after the conflicts in Osh and Jalalabad. After the conflicts, the police often harassed Uzbeks, for example, getting in Uzbek taxi drivers' cars and demanding them to give them a ride for free, intimidating with an arrest for an alleged crime.[220] In 2013, the central government started a police reform which mainly aimed at raising the competence of police officers and making their work more

[219] Group discussion with Uzbek women, Uzgen, May 2014.
[220] Interview with border service officer, Osh, May 2014.

transparent. However, in Uzgen people still questioned the success of this measure. Many Uzbek men agreed with *aksakal's* words that "police look at Kyrgyz and Uzbeks differently; they are in favor of Kyrgyz no matter what and do not follow the legislation."[221] There are many problems in the infrastructure, e.g. traffic jams and car accidents. As Ulugbek, a 35-year old Uzbek farmer, explained:

> Roads are in a very bad condition and car accidents are non-rare. It is a fortune if an Uzbek hits another Uzbek's car or a Kyrgyz hits a Kyrgyz car. However, if there is a Kyrgyz and an Uzbek, there will gather a large crowd and the police will arrive. Kyrgyz always expect the police to help them and the police helps because they are mostly Kyrgyz. And after that, people begin to generalize about the ethnicity of the blamed person in a negative way. This is why, if there is a minor conflict like this, we do not bring it to the police or authorities but go to *aksakals*, who resolve everything peacefully.

Kyrgyz men from other villages in Uzgen *raion* told about similar practice. One said, "Now things are not as they were before [the 2010], many questions are resolved by *aksakals* in mosques."[222] Among other problems, lack of parking lots due to Uzgen's location on central Osh-Jalalabad-Bishkek road and lack of selling points at the bazaar cause conflicts on a regular basis. Namely, Kyrgyz always complain that all places at the bazar are occupied by Uzbeks and that they are deprived of place to trade, so they often trade illegally, which is another problem. As mayor of Uzgen said, all bazaars in the city are private and local authorities do not deal with how selling points at private bazaars are distributed. Therefore, the small-scale "territorial" disputes have the potential of being a reason for a large conflict if not dealt with.

The July 2013 case shows that after the "war," any small reason can become a source of violence. As reported in the Kyrgyz media, a Kyrgyz policeman stopped an Uzbek driver and asked for the documents which the driver did not have with him. Apparently, both talked in a

[221] Interview with *aksakal*, Uzgen, May 2014.
[222] Interview with Kyrgyz man, Kurshab, May 2014.

rude way to each other and Uzbeks who were leaving the mosque nearby gathered immediately. Some from the crowd threw stones at the police car and some assaulted the policemen and tore their uniform.[223] However, the end of the story was never covered by the media. Interestingly, when asked about it, different interviewees gave different answers. Bakai, the 40-year old Kyrgyz taxi driver from Kurshab told:

> The guilty [man] was detained but then they released him the next day, probably for a bribe, but according to law they should have tried him.

The *akim*, a Kyrgyz, described what happened in the following way:

> Uzbeks came and made an ultimatum. Broke a car. The authorities organized awareness raising initiatives and they [the detained and the policeman] made peace in the court in the end.

The mayor of Uzgen, an Uzbek, commented on the same event:

> Both the driver and the policeman were not right. The policemen was standing in the wrong place, not at his post, and both were rude when talking to each other. Our internal affairs authorities should work properly. When police stops Kyrgyz, they can just say, no, I will not leave my car. But people see what is going on and they might ask, why Kyrgyz are released without any punishment and we are not?

Head of the police department in Uzgen, a Kyrgyz:

> Some people are too religious. The Uzbeks driver did not obey the police, he said he was in a rush to *Juma namaz* [Friday prayer] and forgot his documents. Then he tried to escape. At this time people were coming out from the mosque and take a video of their squabble. Usually about 200 people attend a mosque at once, but it was on Friday, so there were about 500 people. Somebody hit a police car with a stone. Many began telling that they are right and the policeman is wrong. Kyrgyz were unhappy about this. They were asking, "Why Uzbeks do not obey the police? Do they live according to some other laws?" They say, they like to live according to sharia. Well, then could not they forgive the policeman if so? Although the policeman could forgive them too, it is true. The driver and some active participants of the disturbance were convicted for three years conditionally. The court tied to be soft on them so as not to intensify the situation. It also did not make them pay a fine. After two days they were released.

Leader of an NGO in Uzgen, an Uzbek:

> The guy who was detained lost a close relative on that day. He was driving in a hurry to the bazaar for some bread for the people who came to express their condolences. Of course

[223] http://www.vb.kg/doc/236552_v_yzgene_konflikt_s_gaishnikom_edva_ne_pereros_v_mejetnicheskiy.html [Accessed on 8 June 2015].

> the policeman was right in pointing out at the violation of the rules. But if you are a policeman you must not be rude. If you are rude, how can you expect that the other person to behave in a respectful way? What they did is unfair. As a result, someone became a national hero and someone was detained.

Both Kyrgyz and Uzbeks gave different versions of how the conflict ended: peacefully according to Kyrgyz *akim*, unfair to Kyrgyz according to a Kyrgyz taxi driver, and unfair to Uzbeks according to Uzbek mayor and an Uzbek NGO leader. Moreover, operating with divergent details of the story, the Kyrgyz head of the police department commented negatively on what he saw as relying on one's religious affiliation as an excuse, while the Uzbek NGO leader called for more understanding. In general, Kyrgyz and Uzbek respondents narrated of their recent memory differently, each supporting the view of the group they belonged to, which reminds of Halbwachs' argument that individuals remember things as members of a group.

In the light of the great narrative inconsistencies shown in the interviews above, it is understandable why the upcoming parliamentary elections in autumn 2015 make the dwellers of southern Kyrgyzstan worry that the politicians will worsen the interethnic relations. An Uzbek *aksakal* Abdugafar Khadji commented that:

> Before the elections they flood our place and divide every street, who has to vote for which party. As a result it often happens that relatives living on the opposite streets have to vote for different candidates and have conflicts because of it.

An NGO leader noted that political competition probably will take nationalist versus moderate tones, which will stir up the wound that have just began to come to normal. He added:

> A Bishkek official said publicly that there was no conflict in Uzgen because Uzbeks got frightened and sat tight in their houses. But do they not understand that are always stupid people who want and are ready to fight? Such words only stir the interethnic relations which are far from perfect in Uzgen.

This is indeed true; even though there was no conflict in Uzgen in 2010, many people describe current relations as "tense" and compare it with a "powder-barrel."[224]

Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, territorial divide along the urban and rural lines plays a great role in how Kyrgyz and Uzbeks perceive themselves and each other. Uzbek population owned houses in what later became the city of Osh before the arrival of Kyrgyz in the Soviet times and was careful to have members from their ethnic group as their neighbors. .This confirms the theories that people make attachments to places that are of high importance to their psychological and physical well-being, as place attachement provides a sense of secutiry as well as a sense of identity. Kyrgyz settled mainly in the apartment blocks and were unsatisfied with such situation, as they felt discriminated on their "own" territory.[225] Therefore when Uzbeks expressed their intention to use the political opportunity to improve their situation, many Kyrgyz interviewees interpreted it as an intention to seize Kyrgyz land and, given the close link between the territory and identity, undermine the Kyrgyz. Uzbeks, on the other hand, emphasized that the perpetrators of the conflict were "strangers" or "people from outside."

As demonstrated in the narratives, both Kyrgyz and Uzbeks as well as some other ethnicities describe the events of 2010 as a war by referring to the use of weapons and using military terminology, such as "making embrasures" and claiming that the other group was armed and prepared to fight well in advance. The term "observing neutrality" by an entire village was also brought up into discussion. The use of the term in the context of close location of places to

[224] Group interview with Uzbek men, Uzgen, May 2014; interview with an Uzbek NGO leader, Uzgen, May 2014; interview with a Kyrgyz woman, Uzgen, May 2014.
[225] Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History.*

each other, implies that in addition to the attachment to greater territory, there is also an attachment to a particular place which can be as small as a village (or even a neighborhood or a street).

Moreover, cases such as the labeling of those who did not fight as "unpatriotic" among the Kyrgyz and the "proving" loyalty by Uzbeks by telling that they do not support separatist ideas also give insight into the "war" narrative and the importance of territory. Additionally, participation of the informal leaders and local dignitaries, such as *aksakals,* who initiated and conducted negotiations, and the *Afghantsy,* who wore their war uniform and also were involved in the processes of conflict prevention and conflict management, could potentially contribute to the view of the events as a war.

Interestingly, Uzgen city and the *raion* of the same name located between the conflict-affected Osh and Jalalabad, managed to prevent a potential conflict despite having similar factors which could have sparked similar violence to that of the conflict in Osh and Jalalabad. This happened due to a number of Uzgen leaders' actions: Uzgen leaders took important decisions and carried them out in a timely manner, kept in touch with people, addressing and dispelling the rumors, appealing to be rationality and reminding the people that Kyrgyz and Uzbeks are interdependent. As evidence of their arguments, many cited the 1990 conflict, reminding that its violence did not bring any good. However, Uzgen is different from Osh and Jalalabad in that Kyrgyz might consider it a "legitimately" Uzbek territory, as subtly expressed by some Kyrgyz interviewees when they were answering questions unrelated to territory.

The findings presented in this chapter demonstrate that the question of territory was one of the most important reasons for the 2010 Kyrgyz-Uzbek conflict in the south of Kyrgyzstan,–

hence the war terminology,– and the narratives about territory that emerged from interviewees' memory continue to shape their views and perceptions of each other.

Conclusion

This thesis has analyzed the 2010 conflict between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in the south of Kyrgyzstan, which resulted in 470 casualties and forced 400,000 people to flee to other regions of the country or into Uzbekistan. In particular, the thesis aimed to contribute to the existing literature on the conflict that mostly focuses on political or socio-economic aspects by offering an insight on how Kyrgyz and Uzbeks' memory of the territory they share contributed to the conflict.

Specifically, the thesis sought to explore why, while scholarly works and both international and Kyrgyz media mainly refer to the 2010 events in Kyrgyzstan as "ethnic violence," "ethnic conflict," and "ethnic bloodshed," the local populations in the south of Kyrgyzstan call what happened "war," although neither the Kyrgyz or Uzbek states were involved officially. Based on the personal 2014 field research, this thesis has argued that the key to understanding this terminological difference is the question of territory. To explain the main argument more comprehensively, the thesis placed the discussed recent developments in a longer perspective and discussed the different memories of territory in Kygryzstan and the ways they were learnt, transmitted and mobilized in a historical persepctive. It partucularly showed how memory of territory can create a feeling of endangered ethnic identity and in critical situations turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy. The thesis pursued its main argument by studying different periods in the Kygryz history and state activities related to territory.

The first chapter focused on the pre-Soviet and Soviet history and demonstrated that Soviet national policies were self-contradictory. On the one hand, the Soviets were afraid of Kyrgyz becoming nationalist and consequently challenging the hegemony of the Soviet state. On

the other hand, the Soviets themselves encouraged the Kyrgyz to develop nationalism so as to differentiate Soviet rule from the Tsarist rule. The outcome of both goals was ambiguous as well. The Kyrgyz did not develop a sense of a nation to the degree of the peoples of the Caucasus or the Balkans. However, they developed a sense of nationality stronger than at any other time in Kyrgyz history, namely, due to the territorial and political policies which were practiced nearly for 70 years, Kyrgyz became persuaded that: "(1) There exists an ancient and glorious Kyrgyz nation to which the indigenous population of Kyrgyzstan belongs; (2) Kyrgyz [are] representatives of the indigenous nation [and] live on the territory of their national state; (3) the republic, its resources, the state and other institutions are the property of the Kyrgyz nation."[226]

The second chapter examined the first two decades of Kyrgyzstan's independence and argued that territory-related questions were crucial in shaping the views of Kyrgyz and Uzbeks about each other. The chapter demonstrated how the newly established Kyrgyz state continued the nationalist course established by the Soviets. Kyrgyzstan adopted the *Manas* ideology, based on the Kyrgyz national epic of the same name, which resembled Soviet *korenizatsiia* in that it favored Kyrgyz over the minorities and negatively affected the relations between the Kyrgyz and the Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan. There was also developed a he civic national program called *Kyrgyzstan Our Common Home*, however in the most difficult situations related to territorial questions,– the border dispute with Uzbekistan and the invasion of the radical Islamic organization,– it was abandoned in favor of *Manas*. Moreover, the named events fundamentally changed the views of Kyrgyz and Uzbeks of each other. While Kyrgyz became more negative and less trustful towards Uzbeks because of the perception of Uzbeks as people linked to Uzbekistan and not Kyrgyzstan, Uzbeks, on the other hand, became more willing to integrate into

[226] Tishkov, "Don't' Kill Me, I'm a Kyrgyz!" 147.

the Kyrgyzstani society. The border dispute made Uzbeks to change their memory of Uzbekistan as their place of attachment and instead develop an attachment to Kyrgyzstan.

The third chapter showed that territorial divide along the urban and rural lines plays a great role in how Kyrgyz and Uzbeks perceive themselves and each other. Uzbek population owned houses in what later became the city of Osh before the arrival of Kyrgyz in the Soviet times and was careful to have members from their ethnic group as their neighbors. Kyrgyz settled mainly in the apartment blocks left by Russians and were unsatisfied with such situation, as they felt discriminated on their "own" territory. Therefore when Uzbeks expressed their intention to use the political opportunity to improve their situation, many Kyrgyz interviewees interpreted it as an intention to seize Kyrgyz land and, given the close link between the territory and identity, undermine the Kyrgyz. Uzbeks, on the other hand, emphasized that the perpetrators of the conflict were "strangers" or "people from outside."

As demonstrated in the narratives, both Kyrgyz and Uzbeks as well as some other ethnicities describe the events of 2010 as a war by referring to the use of weapons and using military terminology, such as "making embrasures" and claiming that the other group was armed and prepared to fight well in advance. The term "observing neutrality" by an entire village was also brought up into discussion. The chapter found that the use of the term in the context of close location of places to each other can imply that in addition to the attachment to greater territory, there is also an attachment to a particular place which can be as small as a village (or even a neighborhood or a street). Moreover, cases such as the labeling of those who did not fight as "unpatriotic" among the Kyrgyz and the "proving" loyalty by Uzbeks by telling that they do not support separatist ideas also give insight into the "war" narrative and the importance of territory. Additionally, participation of the informal leaders and local dignitaries, such as *aksakals*, who

initiated and conducted negotiations, and the *Afghantsy*, who wore their war uniform and also were involved in the processes of conflict prevention and conflict management, could potentially contribute to the view of the events as a war. Furthermore, many Kyrgyz interviewees mentioned the existence of another war,– an information war**,–** while the Uzbeks did not. According to Kyrgyz respondents, the information war took place in the conflict aftermath in international media, which wrote about the 2010 events extensively and mostly identified the Kyrgyz interim government as responsible for failing to manage the situation on the ground. The insight from interviewees about the "information war" could possibly mean that Kyrgyz imagine the war having gone on for some time after the events, but taking a different form.

Uzgen city and the *raion* of the same name located between the conflict-affected Osh and Jalalabad, managed to prevent a potential conflict despite having similar factors which could have sparked similar violence to that of the conflict in Osh and Jalalabad. As the chapter demonstrated, this happened due to a number of Uzgen informal leaders' actions: Uzgen leaders took important decisions and carried them out in a timely manner, kept in touch with people, addressing and dispelling the rumors, appealing to be rationality and reminding the people that Kyrgyz and Uzbeks are interdependent. As evidence of their arguments, many cited the 1990 conflict, reminding that its violence did not bring any good. However, Uzgen is different from Osh and Jalalabad in that Kyrgyz might consider it a "legitimately" Uzbek territory, as subtly expressed by some Kyrgyz interviewees when they were answering questions unrelated to territory.

Therefore, the analysis presented in the thesis shows how memory plays a crucial role in shaping national identity by linking present generations to the distant past of their ancestors through the practice of rituals, be it celebrations of the *Manas* epic or a production of history textbooks with nationalist and exclusivist implications. The narratives presented in the thesis

demonstrated that, while the distant past is "fixed," it is at the same time subject to changes by successive generations through different interpretation, transformation or appropriation. One and the same story can be told in different ways by different people as they "remember" it. As the thesis has shown in the secondary analysis of the interviews in which people were not asked about their memory of territory, but most of them they still appealed to it. Hence, the findings of this thesis corroborate theories of Halbwachs, Assmann, and Bonnemaison that memory of territory is the most ubiquitous - as it stems from both biological need of humans to secure their survival as species and the geographical need to adapt to the environment. The findings of the thesis also confirm the theory that territory can serve as a source of identity and when disputed, has a possibility to become a source of conflict. On a broader level, the case of the Kyrgyz-Uzbek 2010 conflict challenges the applicability and also calls for reconsidering the validity of the 'international-civil' typology of warfare.

Appendix 1. Fieldwork questions on the reasons for preserving peace in Uzgen during the 2010 events in the south of Kyrgyzstan

Questions for ordinary citizens

- What is your age, marital status, occupation?
- What is your educational background?
- What problems does your community face?
- How does your community deal with these problems? Does the local government help you with these problems? If so, in what ways?
- Do day-to-day aspects affect the interethnic relations?
- What were the Kyrgyz-Uzbek relations like in your village/town before the Osh and Jalalabad conflicts in 2010?
- Did the interethnic relations in your village/town change after the Osh and Jalalabad conflicts in 2010? If they did, what exactly changed?
- How likely do you think was violence similar to the violence in Osh and Jalalabad in your village/town?
- How did your village/town make it possible to avoid the conflict? Who participated in preserving peace in your village/town? Why, to your mind, the measures taken worked for preserving peace in your area?
- How would you estimate the role of authorities and police in the process of peace negotiations?
- How would you estimate the role of informal leaders in the process of peace negotiations?
- Do you know of any projects or events the local government initiated after the conflict in Osh and Jalalabad to strengthen interethnic relations in your village/town? If yes, what are they? How would you evaluate their effectiveness?
- Do you know of any other actors contributing to supporting peace in your community, such as NGOs, international agencies?

Questions for leaders of civil society organizations

- When was your organization established? Whose initiative it was? How many people work/are involved in your organization?

- What problems does your community face? Which problems does your organization address? In what way?
- Do the local government or any other organizations help you with your work? If so, in what ways?
- Do day-to-day aspects affect the interethnic relations?
- What were the Kyrgyz-Uzbek relations like in your village/town before the Osh and Jalalabad conflicts in 2010?
- Did the interethnic relations in your village/town change after the Osh and Jalalabad conflicts in 2010? If they did, what exactly changed?
- How likely do you think was violence similar to the violence in Osh and Jalalabad in your village/town?
- How would you estimate the role of your organization in the process of peace negotiations?
- How would you estimate the role of authorities and police?
- How would you estimate the role of informal leaders?
- Did you start new projects after the conflict in Osh and Jalalabad? If yes, what are they?
- Do you know of any projects or events the local government initiated after the conflict in Osh and Jalalabad to strengthen interethnic relations in your village/town? If yes, what are they? How would you evaluate their effectiveness?

Questions for the *akim*/mayor/head of police station

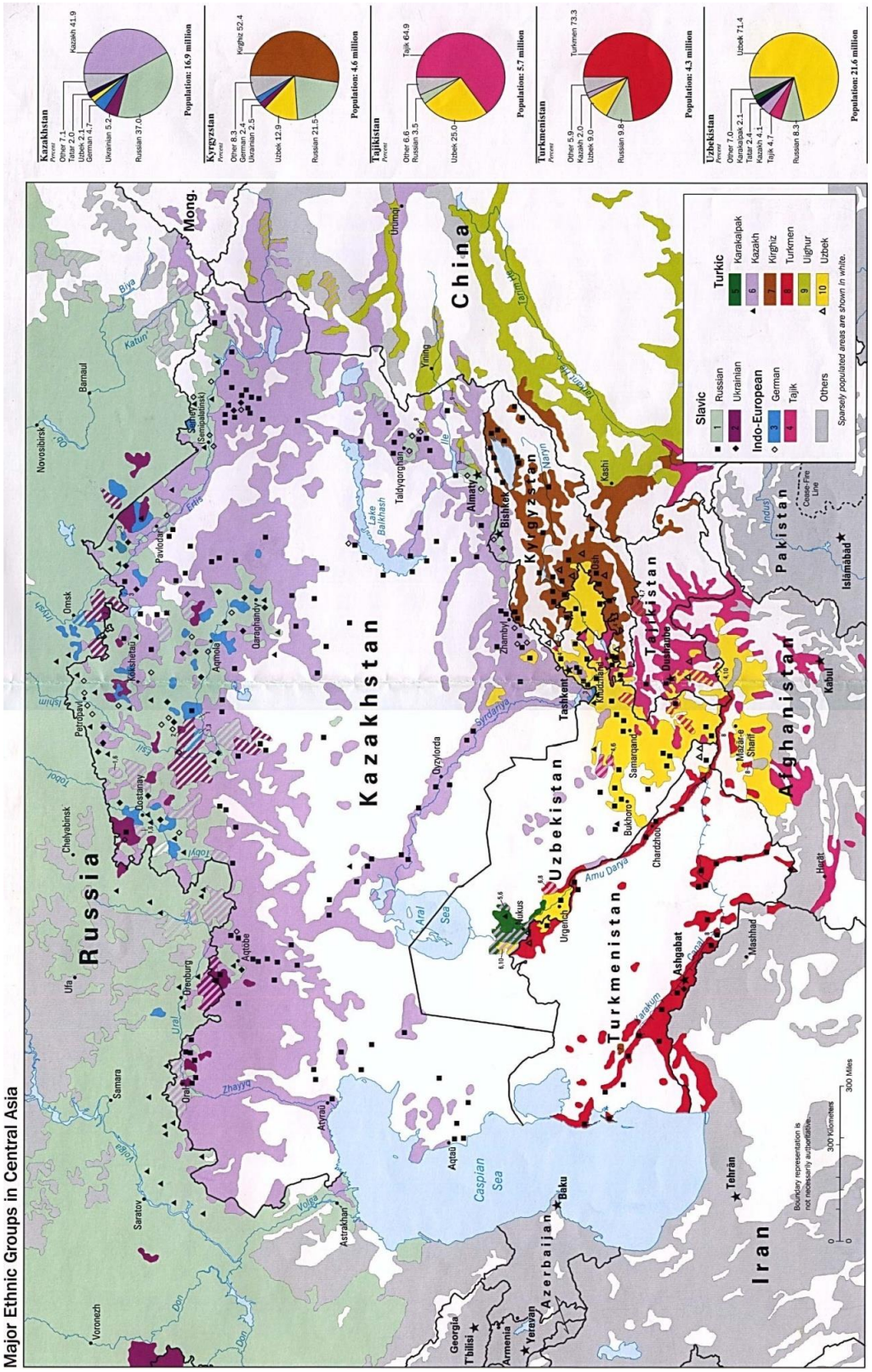
- Could you tell about your district/town?
- How many people there are in your district/town? What kind of businesses there are?
- What problems does the community in your district/town face? Are these problems being solved by your institution? In what way?
- Do day-to-day aspects affect the interethnic relations?
- What were the Kyrgyz-Uzbek relations like in your village/town before the Osh and Jalalabad conflicts in 2010?
- Did the interethnic relations in your village/town change after the Osh and Jalalabad conflicts in 2010? If they did, what exactly changed?

- How likely do you think was violence similar to the violence in Osh and Jalalabad in your village/town?
- How did your village/town make it possible to avoid the conflict? Who participated in preserving peace in your village/town? Why, to your mind, the measures taken worked for preserving peace in your area?
- How would you estimate the role of your organization in the process of peace negotiations?
- How would you estimate the role of informal leaders in the process of peace negotiations?
- Could the July 2013 incident between the Kyrgyz policemen and an Uzbek driver potentially lead to interethnic conflict in Uzgen?

Questions for *aksakals*/religious leaders

- What problems does your community come to you with? How do you usually deal with them?
- Do you have to deal with interethnic conflicts? How serious are they? Has their number increased after the 2010 conflicts in Osh and Jalalabad?
- Do day-to-day aspects affect the interethnic relations?
- What were the Kyrgyz-Uzbek relations like in your village/town before the Osh and Jalalabad conflicts in 2010?
- Did the interethnic relations in your village/town change after the Osh and Jalalabad conflicts in 2010? If they did, what exactly changed?
- How likely do you think was violence similar to the violence in Osh and Jalalabad in your village/town?
- How did your village/town make it possible to avoid the conflict? Who participated in preserving peace in your village/town? Why, to your mind, the measures taken worked for preserving peace in your area?
- How would you estimate the role of authorities and police in the process of peace negotiations?
- Do you know of any projects or events the local government initiated after the conflict in Osh and Jalalabad to strengthen interethnic relations in your village/town? If yes, what are they? How would you evaluate their effectiveness?

Appendix 2. Ethnic Composition of former Soviet Republics in Central Asia



Appendix 3. Map of Kyrgyzstan

Source: http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/kyrgyzstan-political-map.htm

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